DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 213 CE 042 047

AUTHOR	Fellenz, Robert A.; Conti, Gary J.
TITLE	Comprehensive Evaluation of the Statewide Texas Adult Basic Education Program: Evaluating a Human Enterprise.
INSTITUTION	Texas A and M Univ., College Station. Coll. of Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Texas Education Agency, Austin. Div. of Adult and Community Education Programs.
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	100p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Basic Education; Dropouts; Educational Change; Educational Cooperation; Educational Planning; *Federal Programs; Formative Evaluation; *Needs Assessment; Program Development; *Program Evaluation; Staff Development; *State Programs; Student Recruitment; Summative Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	Linkage; *Texas

ABSTRACT

Data are presented from an evaluation of state and federal adult basic education (ABE) programs in Texas. An introduction describes the methodology by which data were collected. The next three sections contain survey data from and about students, teachers, and administrators. Other sections examine the program planning process, management and organization, linkages with other organizations and agencies, student recruitment, how to reach students most in need, student benefits from the program, dropouts and stopouts, and staff development practices and needs. Another section contains information from interviews with 13 individuals who have long served the basic education effort in Texas. Their perceptions of change in ABE during the past decade are presented. The next section groups requests for help and suggestions of ways in which resources could be made more effective into six areas: help needed from the Texas Education Agency, funding needs, staffing and training needs, teaching needs, vocational training needs, and need for a renewed spirit. Twenty conclusions based on findings of this evaluation study are presented. They are related to patterns of service, varying quality, linkages, program planning, management, teachers, and student needs. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED260213

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE STATEWIDE TEXAS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM: EVALUATING A HUMAN ENTERPRISE

Prepared by:
Robert A. Fellenz
Gary J. Conti

Interdisciplinary Education
College of Education
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

1984

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G Conti

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE042047

This project was performed pursuant to a grant from the Division of Adult and Community Education, Texas Education Agency. The comments, opinions, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the project staff and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Texas Education Agency. No official endorsement by the Texas Education Agency should be inferred.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Overview	1
Design of the Evaluation	1
Students	4
Characteristics of Students	4
Former Students	6
Current Student Survey	8
Teachers Descriptions of Students	9
The Needs of Students	12
Teachers	14
Students' View of Teachers	16
Full-Time and Part-Time Employed	17
Dedication and Commitment of the Teaching Staff	19
Compensation for Instructional Duties	20
Instructional and Clerical Aides	21
Duties and Functions of Aides	22
Administrators	24
Co-op Directors	24
Other Administrative Personnel	24
Planning ABE Programs	27
Planning Policy	27
The Goals of Adult Basic Education	29
Goal Setting at the Local Level	30
Input into the Planning Process	30
Advisory Groups	30
Co-op Coordinating Committees	30
Local Advisory Committees	31
Input of Staff Members	33
Need Surveys	34
Impact of State Plan on Local Planning	34
Management and Organization	37
Staffing	37
Selection of Co-op Directors	37
Selection of Supervisors and Other Mid-management Personnel	37
Selection of Instructional Personnel	37
Quality in Teaching	38
Teacher Benefits	39
Evaluation	39

The Organization of the System 40
Sponsoring Agencies 41
Delivery of Services 42
Local Delivery Systems 43
Adult learning centers. 43
Local classes. 43
Provision of Materials 44
Teaching Facilities 45

Linkages with Other Organizations and Agencies 49

Survey of Community Agencies 49
Field Comments on Linkage 51
Problems in Establishing Linkages 53
Importance of Linkages with Other Agencies 54

Recruitment 55

Why Adult Students Enter ABE Programs 55
Publicizing the Adult Education Program 56
Students' Comments on Recruitment 58

Students Most in Need 61

What Students Gain from the Program 63

Self-Confidence 63
Other Gains 64
Student Views on Program Benefits 66

Students Who Drop Out of Programs 68

Stopouts 68
Reducing the Number of Dropouts 70

Staff Development 72

Present Staff Development Practices 72
Training Needs of Teachers 72
Training Needs of Administrators 74
Methods of Providing Training for Teachers 75

A Decade of State Funding as Viewed by Historical Figures 78

Background of the Historical Figures 78
Impact of State Funding on Adult Basic Education 78
Changes During the Decade of State Funding 79
Changes in Students 79
Changes in Teachers 80
Changes in Administrators 81
Other Significant Changes 82
Texas, ABE, and the Future 82

Pleas for Help 85

Help Needed from TEA 85
Funding Needs 86
Staffing and Training Needs 86
Teaching Needs 87
Vocational Training Needs 87
Need for a Renewed Spirit 88

Conclusions 89

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Texas has two sources of funds for the adult basic education (ABE) program. One source is federal flow through funds which were originally authorized by the Adult Education Act of 1966. Texas' general plan for complying with this law and expending these funds is contained in the State Plan. The other source is state funds. These funds were authorized in 1973 by House Bill 147. Guidelines for implementing a program of adult education to provide adults an opportunity to continue their education through a secondary or equivalent level or to acquire the educational prerequisites for employment are provided in the Texas State Plar for Adult Education.

The design for this evaluation sought to gather data related to both the state and federal programs. The design rests on the assumption that education is a human enterprise. As such it is a process which deeply affects people in both the affective and cognitive domains. Therefore, a variety of data had to be collected. Some data needs were suitable for collection by means of survey techniques. Teachers in the state were randomly surveyed to gather generalizable data about the nature of the instruction process. Current students were surveyed by randomly sampling classrooms. All co-op directors were surveyed. Former students were surveyed through the co-op directors. Finally a variety of linkage agencies across the state were randomly sampled.

Qualitative data, however, were collected by interviews. Individuals in all segments of the ABE operation were interviewed. Teachers, students, administrators, and state agency personnel were interviewed at state and regional meetings and at 10 local program sites. In addition, significant figures who have been involved in the program for a number of years were interviewed to provide a historical perspective to events in the movement.

Design of the Evaluation

Effective evaluations provide opportunities to improve. In order to be effective, evaluation designs must properly reflect the nature of the enterprise being evaluated and the overall purpose for which the evaluation was initiated. Since adult basic education is a social activity which involves people from many diverse backgrounds and with a myriad of reasons for not completing a basic education, a naturalistic evaluation design was necessary in order to generate data which was sensitive to the students reasons for participation in the program and to their views of the program. The nature of adult basic education also necessitates that the views, concerns, and interpretions of teaching, administrative, and support staff be gathered. The best method for obtaining these types of data is by means of interviews in the natural setting.

The purpose of this evaluation was both summative and formative. Summative evaluations seek to gather data suitable for judging impact or outcomes. Formative evaluation solicits data which can assist in better understanding the ongoing phenomenon and which can be used for refinement and improvement. Summative data were needed by the state agency for the purpose of making determinations of the success of the current federally funded Adult Basic Education program and of determining the impact of 10 years of state funding in the area of adult basic education. However, formative information was also needed for the purposes of future planning and of improving the existing system. Because of these dual purposes of the overall evaluation, this evaluation design provided for gathering a variety of data by means of interviews and surveys and for extensive on-site visits by the evaluation team.

Survey data were gathered from administrators, teacher, students, and linkage agencies. The administrative questionnaire was sent to all co-op directors. This two-part questionnaire sought demographic information about the co-op and information related to planning, policy making, instruction, linkages, recruitment, staffing, staff development, and special projects.

Teachers were randomly sampled. Since there are approximately 1,800 teachers currently employed in the various ABE programs throughout the state, a sample of 350 was adequately large for a random survey. Teachers' names and addresses were selected from the current mailing list for Project TRENDS. Prior to receiving the questionnaire, the teachers selected for the study were sent a letter explaining the evaluation and requesting their

participation. Three weeks after the initial mailing, follow-up questionnaires were mailed to nonrespondents. The teacher questionnaire consisted of 36 items and elicited information in the areas of personal background, curriculum formation, classroom operations, students, materials, evaluation, facilities, and staff development.

Survey data were gathered from both current and former students. Since ABE students constitute a highly mobile population and because many view evaluations as threatening, it was recommended by teachers and administrators in the pilot testing of the instruments that student data be gathered through their assistance. Therefore, the randomization of current students was linked to the teachers. Six current student questionnaires were included with each of the teacher questionnaires. Teachers were asked to distribute them to a variety of students and to return them with their questionnaire. Since the co-op directors controlled the mailing lists for former students of the program, six former student questionnaires were included with their questionnaire, and they were asked to distribute them to a variety of students who were no longer in the program. In order to maintain the student's anonymity and to encourage the return of the former student questionnaires, these questionnaires had a postage stamp affixed and had the project's mailing address printed on them. Both student questionnaires were also short. They contained items related to the reasons for participation, benefits from the program, self-description, and comments on the program.

Community agencies which could be expected to have linkages with the local ABE programs were randomly sampled. Mailing lists were secured for all Texas libraries, employment commissions, chambers of commerce, sheriff's offices, public school superintendents, and CETA sponsors. CETA was selected rather than JTPA because most JTPA offices were not yet operating at the beginning of this evaluation. Statistically adequate random samples were selected for each type of agency. Short pre-labeled and stamped questionnaires and a cover letter were sent to the 1,155 members of the random sample. Each questionnaire contained six questions related to class offerings in the area, perceptions of the need for a local ABE program, extent of past cooperation, evaluation of the success of the local program, and suggestions for improved ABE services to the community in the future.

Interview data were gathered from co-op directors, supervisors, teachers, aides, students, linkages agents, advisory board members, state agency personnel, and historical figures who had been involved in ABE in Texas during the past 10 years. All of the interviews with those involved in the daily operation of the local program and with students were conducted in the 10 co-ops with the prime sponsors located in Corsicana, Dallas, Keerville, McAllen, Odessa, Rusk, San Antonio, Texas City, Victoria, and Wichita Falls. These sites were selected because they offered diversity in size, location, student composition, type of program, record of past performance, and leadership style. Arrangements for on-site visits were coordinated through the local co-op director. The size of the evaluation team for each site varied with the geographic and program size of each program.

Open-ended interviews were conducted. The administrative interview schedule focussed on background information, planning, management, recruitment, instructional staff, linkages, and the instructional program. The teacher interview schedule contained the topics of background data, instructional program, instructional staff, students, planning, management, facilities, and linkages. The student interview schedule included student background, reasons for initiating participation and for continuing in the program, and assessments of the instructional staff, the program, facilities, and personal gains. Interviews with teachers were restricted to 1 hour, and those with students were usually less than one-half hour. Since the evaluation team was interested in quality, in-depth data, each interviewer concentrated on probing for understanding and on following-up on revealing comments. Consequently, not all items on the interview schedules were pursued to the same degree. This approach is consistent with the naturalistic evaluation design and produced rich, descriptive data.

Other interviews were conducted at a variety of sites. Those with the historical figures and the state agency personnel were conducted at the convenience of the interviewee. As a result, several of these were at state and regional meetings. Others such as publishers who had the potential of providing insights about the ABE program were also interviewed at these meetings.

Thus, a comprehensive design was used for collecting data for this evaluation. Relevant publics with a stake in the ABE enterprise were included. Some data were gathered by survey instruments according to a rationalistic design which was slightly modified to conform to the realities of ABE programs. Other data were gathered by interviews according to a naturalistic design. For the final analysis, all data were pooled.

STUDENTS

Characteristics of Students

In the course of the on-site visits nearly 100 students were interviewed. Forty-five percent were male, and 55% were female. Thirty-four percent were Mexican American; 25% were Anglo; 23% were Black; and 18% were of Asian or other backgrounds. Ages varied greatly with 14% being in their teens; 33% in their twenties; 20% in their thirties; 16% in their forties; 7% in their fifties; and 4% over sixty. More than half were enrolled in GED programs, approximately one quarter in ESL classes, and one tenth in ABE studies. A few were working on high school diploma programs or preparing to enter either college or training programs.

Their backgrounds, their abilities, their needs varied tremendously. Some were young, seeking credentials so they could go out and make their mark on the world. Others were old, wanting to prove to themselves that they could learn to read before they died. Some came from very deprived backgrounds while others had had numerous opportunities in life. Some had never gone to school while others had degrees. There were those who had good jobs or even their own businesses and had proven their ability to be quite successful in life. Others had struggled all their lives with serious learning disabilities. Many needed just a little academic help to move into the mainstream of society, but many more needed to have someone to accept them as individuals and to work with them patiently and caringly so that they could begin to build worthwhile lives for themselves.

In the statements that follow these students speak for themselves. Although the words may not be exact quotations, their thoughts are transmitted as accurately and clearly as possible.

> I had 9 years of schooling and am now pursuing a GED. I wish someone had "kicked my tail" and made me stay in school. I attend classes 6 hours per day, 3 days per week. (Black female, 19 years old)

> I'm a high school graduate but have returned to improve my reading/writing skills and attend the learning center 6 hours daily. (Black male, 19 years old)

When young I had 9 years of school. I am now attending GED classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9 to 12, mornings. I had little encouragement to attend school when younger and felt I was too old to learn before these classes. (White female, 54 years old)

I had 9 years of schooling and now am attending GED classes 3 hours per day, 3 days per week. I wish I had stayed in school, but left because I was bored (White female, 19 years old)

I went to school for 10 years but dropped out to take care of my mother. I attend school 3 days per week, 3 hours per day to get my GED. I need to get a job to help out with expenses at home. (Black male, 25 years old)

I attended school through fifth grade and left to get a job. I now attend classes 7 hours per day to get a GED so I can get a job. (White female, 37 years old)

I went to tenth grade in school but was expelled from school for a drug problem. I now attend GED classes 2 hours per day at a half-way house. (White male, 18 years old)

"George" had no place to go after leaving prison so he came to the half-way house. He is 36 years old, white, and an addict. He is trying to break the habit and can do so as long as he stays here. Out on the street, he goes back to alcohol and drugs.

This 28-year-old female is a high school graduate from Guatemala. She is interested only in learning English and drives 15 miles per day to attend classes every morning.

I completed high school in Louisiana but feel the need for remedial classes to gain sufficient reading/writing skills to get a job. (Black female, about 45)

They are husband and wife, and each had 10 years of schooling. Now they attend classes Monday-Tuesday, 6-8 p.m. (A couple in their sixties)

I work as a dishwasher at a local restaurant. I dropped out in freshman year in high school. I

wish my parents had put some pressure on me to stay in school. I dropped out because of laziness. I got a job at a fruit stand. I think parents need to talk to kids, set down some rules. (Male, 22 years old)

This 54-year-old female, originally from Panama. She is enrolled in ESL and attends classes 2 nights per week. She works on her own to learn English at home too. She is married to an American citizen but unable to speak with him. She is happy learning but would like to have classes 5 days a week instead only 2 days.

I went to school for only 1 year when a child. We lived far out, and I was unable to go. I have been in this program for more than 3 years and come to class 3 mornings a week for ABE. I was one of 15 children. The younger ones went to school. I couldn't because I had to work on the farm. When I got married I had seven children and helped all of them to get an education. (Black female, 67 years old)

When I was in high school, I was always in a big classroom. I do better with less students. Some of the subjects were hard. (Anglo female, 19 years old)

Every teacher tried to help me. I guess I just didn't want to learn. It seems when you're older you want to learn more. (Male, 39 years old)

This 30-year-old, Mexican-American works as a heavy equipment operator for the city. He has had 11 years of schooling and is in a GED class. He is coming to this program on release time from the city. The city pays him to go to this GED class 2 afternoons a week. When he was in school he enjoyed learning. The reason he quit was that the school district asked him to move to a different high school. It was new. He missed his friends, so he quit.

He is 48 years old and had 6 years of schooling when he quit school because he was the oldest boy at home and had to work to help his family. His family was very poor. He comes to class 2 afternoons a week and gets paid through his job for coming. His family helps him with his subjects. All of his children graduated from high school. He would like to have a little business some day and make benches and shelves and do other carpentry work. He needs his GED because it will help him with his paperwork.

This lady is 45 years old. She had 4 years of school in Mexico, is in an ABE class, and comes to these classes 5 days a week. She can read and write in Spanish but did not know how to read or write in English when she started coming to this program. Her dream is to be a secretary.

This student had received the GED some years ago but is now brushing up for business college. "You're never too old to learn," she says.

She stayed in GED prep classes 3 or 4 years because she was "afraid to take the GED." The teacher kept telling her she was ready--"they almost pushed me over there" to take the test. She had learned to read and write in Spanish in Mexico, but she did not go to school. She feels that some of the younger students who have 12 years in the public schools have a poor background too.

This student is blind; she is in the CBHSD program. she liked school as a youngster and did well--that makes it easier to go back later. She always emphasized the importance of going to school to her children.

This is one of a group of food service workers at a community college who has been recruited into GED. They are managers who are taking classes in nutrition, sanitation, and safety and working toward the GED.

This student has been coming to the learning center for 7 years. She has recently completed the GED. She had dropped out of school after very few years and could not read when she came to adult education. She relates that she was diagnosed in the second grade as being either mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed (it was probably the latter). She has extremely bad feelings about the public school system and her ill-use therein.

A back injury changed my life; I had always worked two jobs ("day and night"). I was going crazy just sitting at home; I can't get a new job that does not require heavy work without an education. I just wish I had started earlier--most of my friends have a high school degree. My wife has her diploma. (Male Hispanic, 30 years old)

She was majoring in EMT, but she had a problem--writing backward. She was sent to a counselor who sent her to ABE.

This 59-year-old, black woman dropped out in of her segregated school in third grade. She worked as cook but could not read recipes. So she learned to cook by trial and error. Now she can read. She also takes care of children. She says: "Now I feel I can do things."

Former Students

Survey data were gathered from students who had formerly been enrolled in the program. Since adult basic education students are a highly mobile population and since it is highly unreasonable to expect them to accept the legitimacy of a research study from a distant university which suddenly elicits their participation, directly reaching this target population posed a problem. However, consultation with many local program directors indicated that they had the means to get survey instruments into the hands of former students and that they had the credibility for requesting participation in the study. Therefore, instead of attempting to randomly sample former students, each co-op director was sent seven Former Student Survey forms. These pre-stamped forms were then distributed to former students by the co-op director. Completed forms were mailed directly back to Texas A&M University. Thus, in this survey the rigor of random sampling was mitigated by the realities of the situation in order to insure the return of meaningful data.

The Former Student Survey contained seven questions. It sought to uncover the reasons for attending, the perceived gains from the program, and the perceptions of the program. Of the 364 surveys mailed to co-op directors, 192 were completed and returned by former students for a 53% return rate. Of these, 49.5% attended day classes; 42.4% attended evening classes; 8.2% went both during the day and evening. Most were secondary level students; 71.3% were enrolled in GED; 17.2% were classified as Pre-GED; only 11.5% were in the English as a second language program.

Many possible reasons exist for enrollment in an adult basic education program. However,the most popular reason cited by the participants was to finish high school or to get the GED; 33.3% selected this option which leads to a recognized certificate of high school equivalency. The second most important reason, which included 17.2% of the sample, for participating in adult basic education was for self-improvement. Another 14.4% enrolled in the program either to get a job or to get a better job. Some focused on longer-term goals; 11.7% hoped to use the ABE program as a prerequisite for getting into college. Several other reasons which are often informally discussed among adult educators received only a small response. They were 8.3% for helping the children to do their homework, 6.7% to learn the English language, 3.9% to get into a job training program, 2.2% to learn to read and write, and 2.2% for other reasons. Thus, two of the three most important reasons for participating relate to the practical areas of educational certification or employment. Together they included nearly half of participants. The other major factor relates to the affective domain of self-improvement. These three categories included nearly two-thirds of the sample.

Participants were presented with a list of seven items and asked to indicate if they had accomplished any of them since enrolling in the ABE program. The last item in the list was located and marked by the greatest number of participants; 74% indicated that they now felt more confidence about themselves! In addition 59.4% said that they had accomplished their educational goal of passing the GED test. The other possible accomplishments trailed far behind these two major changes. In the less frequent areas, 20.3% got a job; 16.1% got a better job or a raise; 7.8% voted for the first time; 6.3% became citizens; 3.1% got off welfare. These responses clearly indicate that the major outcomes of ABE lie in changing attitudes and in granting educational certificates. These are two crucial elements for long term growth. Citizens who feel good about themselves and who have the basic educational credential for social and economic mobility strengthen the fabric of democracy.

Larry Martin of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has interviewed 79 adult basic education participants and has developed a typology which suggests that ABE students can be identified with one of four categories. One group, the Entrepreneurs, have been rather successful in life, knew what they wanted in life, and knew how to accomplish their goals. The Regulars tend to be good workers and employed regularly but sometimes have trouble

accomplishing personal goals. The Marginals have tried hard to find a job but are somewhat unsure of their place in society and often have trouble expressing their goals. The Underclass does not really fit in with the rest of society, and its members have done many things that could have gotten them in trouble with the law.

Participants were asked to self-select the phrase which best described themselves. In this process 38.6% identified with the entrepreneur category, and 35.3% identified with the regulars classification. Thus, 73.9% of the group perceived themselves as closely associated with the mainstream culture. Another 23.9 identified themselves as marginals who live on the fringes of the mainstream society. Only 2.2% saw themselves as out of step with the rest of society. Although it may be socially undesirable to assign the misfit characteristics of the underclass to oneself and although self-selection may inflate the value of the option picked, these figures indicate either that the programs are not attracting many of the hard-to-reach or that this sampling failed to adequately represent that group. Whichever it is, ABE personnel must remember that while it is contributing to the positive self-development of those who come to the program, the most-in-need represent a large group who need similar services but who are not being accounted for.

An open-ended question asked the former students why they were no longer attending adult basic education classes. Most (80.7%) responded. Their answers formed three categories. The two largest categories were closely related. Those in the major category, which contained 43.9% of the responses, indicated that they had completed the GED. Most in this category simply said they had finished the GED tests or as one student wrote "completed!!" Several added that they are now attending college. Several also added that they have gotten either a job or a job promotion. One comment said "retired at age 58 and then received my GED."

Although many in the second category with 32.9% of the responses had been enrolled in the GED program, they expressed their reasons for no longer attending class in broader terms. They stated "because I feel I have accomplished my goal." Several in this category also provided clarification of what reaching their goal meant. Many said they are attending college. Nearly half of these enrolled in nursing programs. One said, "I am currently enrolled as a pre-law student in college on an academic scholarship." Others said their goal was to learn English, get their citizenship, get into a vocational school, or to get a job. Many in this category expressed a feeling that completing this program was just a first step for them. One graduate said, "I have reached my goal for now."

The third category which contained 23.2% of the responses contained the negative responses. These reflected either personal problems or scheduling restrictions of the local program. Several mentioned that the program was closed for the summer. One mentioned that the local program was only open during the day. The most frequently mentioned personal reason was a conflict with work schedules. Several mentioned child care problems; one said, "because I didn't have enough money for gas." Some mentioned either personal or family health problems. Some moved from the area. Other reasons mentioned were vacations, tired of attending, tired after work, or a desire to use the time differently.

The second open-ended question asked students about the things that they would like to tell about the adult basic education program which they attended; 82.5% responded to this item. Every response was positive. The largest category of responses indicated that it is a good program and encouraged others to take advantage of the program. They pointed out that they had "learned something different everyday," that they learned to "read and understand what you are reading," that it helped them accomplish things such as getting a job, and that "the rewards you get are worth the time you spend." Collectively, they felt that it is a "wonderful program!" and that "it is well, well worth it!"

A second large category referred to the people and the environment at the programs. Most of the comments about people related to teachers. They said that "the teachers are very helpful;" that "the teachers worked with me and helped when help was needed;" that "its a good place to improve your learning skills and the teachers are very helpful and understanding;" and that the instructors were "pleasant and helpful." Others also included other students in their comments. In referring to all those in the program, they said that "the people there are friendly;" that "the people are nice and you really learn a lot;" and that at the program "you work hard but meet new

people." Concerning the environment they pointed out that "you study at your own speed" and that "the relaxed atmosphere makes learning easy." Two summed up this category with the comments that "if you are unsatisfied that you quit school, they will work you" and that "it is a caring place."

Another large category addressed the "personal gratification," the "self-satisfaction," and the "confidence to go after what you want to do" that each student gained from the program and wished to share with others. These indicated that the program was "instrumental in opening a new world for me." A husband and wife team who had participated said that "it's our vitamin for the day!!" Other comments included:

> It helped me realize that I am important and can do anything I set my mind to.
>
> This class helps me to appreciate education a lot more than before--Plus, it has given me a desire to want to learn more.
>
> That it is good for you and you get a lot out of it. Because life is hard without an education.
>
> We are never too old to learn.
>
> It is never too late for a second chance.
>
> I went because I felt bad about being a drop out.
>
> This was the best thing that ever happened to me.
>
> The whole environment helped me feel important.
>
> It was my salvation.
>
> Take advantage of these programs if you want to get ahead in life!
>
> It's better to go to the program than being a drop out.
>
> It was the best--I feel so good about myself and my education by doing this.
>
> It lets you know that it's a whole world of education out there and you can have your share.

With comments such as this it is no wonder that former students are successful promoters of the program.

Current Student Survey

Questionnaires were administered to students to gather data related to their reasons for their participation, to their demographic background, and to their suggestions for improving the program. Pilot testing of the instruments indicated that the most effective way of securing the completion of surveys was by working through classroom teachers. Therefore, six current student surveys were included in each teacher survey packet that was randomly mailed. Thus, randomization was based on the classroom setting rather than upon the total number of individual students in the program. A total of 311 surveys were returned. Of these, 51.9% were enrolled in GED; 25.8% were in ESL; and 22.3% were in Pre-GED. Most (61.4%) attended in the evening; nearly one-third (32.1%) attended during the day; and only 8.7% attended in both the day and evening.

The students enrolled for a variety of reasons. The most important reason for going to adult basic education classes for 29.2% of the current students was to finish high school or to get the GED; 17.2% enrolled for job related reasons; 13.5% turned to the program to learn the English language. Each of the other possible listed reasons applied to less than 10% of the participants. These were 9.1% to get into college, 6.6% to help children with homework, 4.7% each for getting into a vocational training program and for learning to read and write. Only 1.1% supplied their own reason. Thus, nearly half enrolled either to gain academic certification or to hopefully secure economic advancement.

While the students varied in their reasons for coming to class, they were in overwhelming agreement on the degree to which the classes are helping them. All felt that the classes are helping; 10.2% felt they were helping some; 89.8% felt that the classes were helping a lot.

This strong feeling that the classes are beneficial is reflected in the things that the students have done since enrolling. Over two-thirds (68.5%) now feel better and more confident about themselves; 26.1% have passed the GED test; 19.5% got a better job or pay, and 17.3% got a job; 11.2% have voted for the first time;

9.4% have gotten off welfare; 7.9% have become U.S. citizens. Thus, numerous positive changes have taken place in their lives since enrolling in the program.

As with the former students, the current students were asked to self-select a phrase to describe themselves at the time of enrolling. Using the typology developed by Martin, 35.6% described themselves as being rather successful in life, knowing what they wanted in life, and knowing how to accomplish their goals. Another 29.6% said they are good workers and employed regularly but sometimes have trouble accomplishing personal goals. The third group with 27.7% said that they had tried hard to find a job but are somewhat unsure of their place in society and often have trouble expressing their goals. Only 7.1% do not believe that they fit in with the rest of society and have done things that could have gotten them into trouble with the law. These responses closely resemble those given by the former students. Both indicate that the former and current students see themselves as part of the mainstream of society and are not part of the hard-to-reach underclass of society.

The students were asked to indicate if any of the things on a list of five items would help them learn better. The most frequent response (40.1%) was more class time. Free child care services were marked by 17.3% of the participants, and 14.4% marked free transportation to class. Better materials was indicated by 13.7%. Only 4.3% indicated a need for better teachers. Of the 6.1% who marked the other category, all but two said that nothing additional was needed. The two others cited a need for night classes and for more materials. These responses indicate that although the students feel that they are gaining much, they could make even greater gains if the classes were available a greater number of hours. Although many expressed a need for the supportive services of child care and transportation, the students in the survey did not indicate as great a need for these as did the students and teachers who were interviewed.

The open-ended question on this survey asked the student to express the things that they would like to tell others about the adult basic education program which they attended. Most students indicated that they would tell others that the program is good. Some added that it would help them get a job, that it will help prepare for the GED test, or that it is easy and enjoyable if you attend regularly.

Those in the second largest category mentioned that the program has led to improved self-confidence. One student said, "One thing I know for sure is that they have really made me feel a whole lot better about myself." Another said that "it's never too late to finish your education. It gives you a great sense of satisfaction when you learn something that before you couldn't grasp." Another saw it as a longer term process when saying that it "will help you become a better confident person."

A third large category commented on the teachers and the environment they create. The "teachers are very nice; all are willing to help." The teachers were described by terms such as friendly, good, nice, and excellent. Students appreciated being able to work at their own pace and being given "a second chance to get your diploma." One student felt that "the program is very well organized. Also, the teachers, faculty, and everyone who attends gives each person very much support and confidence in themselves."

A fourth category related to being able to learn many things and to the value of this learning. Several students were impressed by the large amount they were able to learn in the program. One observed "that the more you learn the better off you are in all areas of your life." Several others were appreciative of learning to speak English. Several recognized that it is "time well spent" and that "it's worth the time and effort;" another saw "that here is our chance for a better way of living." One student with a self-rating of misfit in the Martin typology said that "if they need it they should take it. You should do anything in your Power to better yourself. By getting your GED you sure can get into better jobs that can also keep you out of jail."

Teachers Descriptions of Students

When one looks at the teachers' descriptions of their students it is easier to understand why so many of them are willing to put up with poor working conditions and meager pay in order to teach in programs. They are enthused by the high motivation and sense of responsibility shown by the majority of the adult students. They want to be part of the second chance for a good, productive life that these learners see opening before them. Certainly, they are also touched by the hardships and

misfortunes that have plagued the lives of so many of these "undereducated" adults. Yet they are realistic enough to see that much time and effort will have to be spent before any of these dreams will be realized. In the following section quotations selected from interviews with teachers, aides, and supervisors are presented in an effort to provide insight into the instructional staff's view of their students.

There is no one way to describe our Anglos, Chinese, Mexican Americans, and Blacks. They don't fit into one mold . . . . They feel they are missing out on something; with more education maybe they can find work with more dignity to it. (Teacher)

My students vary from middle aged or plus who need reassurance that they can complete their education to non-reading Anglos to technicians from Mexico and other countries who need English to Spanish speakers who got through 8th grade. (Teacher)

We have people who lived in Texas all their lives but who have never gone to school and have never spoken a word of English. (TEA staff member)

I don't know how some of them do it, really. I have one girl who gets up at 4:00 in the morning to get her husband off to work. Then she goes to work at 6 but takes her kids to day care, picks them up, makes dinner, and comes to class. (Teacher)

They are like other people except they dropped out of school to work, to marry, or something. Now they have a sense of loss and want to regain their chance at life. (Teacher)

They are more serious minded about education because . . . . well there is a kind a desperateness about them. Their jobs, their futures are at stake. (Teacher)

I noticed in our program we are getting a younger overall age coming. Most of the older students I have had are anxious they might not be able to hold their jobs. A number who graduate go onto college. (Teacher)

My non-readers include three American born and three other language speakers. They are non-readers because they had a learning disability, were from migrant families or foreign countries, had to work, or school was not important to them. (Aide)

The difficulty of the economy has brought GED students in by the handful. There don't seem to be as many ESL and migrant people; I think they have moved on looking for work. (Co-op director)

I teach literally and figuratively on the wrong side of the tracks. Most of my students are working. They want to get better jobs. (Teacher)

They are impatient--not for learning, but for their life goals--jobs, happiness, and so forth . . . . They want me to vaccinate them with the knowledge they need. (Teacher)

The ages of my students vary from 18 to 65. Most are motivated to learn but are in a hurry. The GED is their main goal. Some have to "brush up" and review for the GED or a job interview. There are a variety of abilities and intelligence, but all have a low self-concept. (Teacher)

They are interesting, come from mostly "blue collar" homes. They are required to come to class. They need to learn to broaden their interests, to become aware of the world around them, and to develop some kind of structure about everything in their lives. (Teacher)

My students are somewhat international with a range of ages and abilities. ESL students are highly motivated to learn. The referral students are not as motivated. Most are GED students. (Teacher)

They are mostly 30 to 50 years old. They want to learn to solve real problems, real issues. They are cooperative in general and want someone to listen to them. They are mostly men in need of math skills and a GED. (Teacher)

They are like everyone else--all ages, ethnic groups, and both sexes. They are high school dropouts, referrals from Rehab, insecure, have old habits they want to break, and need personal hygiene information. (Teacher)

Most are 4.5 grade-level or below. All are referred to the state hospital by the courts.

They need math skills, encouragement to achieve, and the ability to communicate. (Teacher)

They are young, mostly 20 to 30 years old, are impatient for the GED, and are not willing to spend time learning. They have been out of school for several years and need math skills mostly. (Teacher)

I almost have two distinct types of students. One is the dropout from high school who was a rebellious adolescent or had family problems. He comes back to school in adult education and does well. The second type of student is one with a poor background and a very poor self-esteem. I need to build up their self-respect. (Teacher)

Students are very goal-oriented and stick to their work. I'm surprised at how self-directed adult students are. (Teacher)

My students are all male and range in age from 17 to 70. They are nice and respectful. They range in ability from very slow to very capable. Some need to learn to write their names. (Teacher)

These students need the basics, pre-GED mostly. They need help in reading, writing, and basic skills. Some need to be able to read signs and basic directions. All need to build up their self-confidence. (Teacher)

Students are friendly. Once they feel accepted, they will do anything for the teacher. The students will help discipline others in the classroom. They are warm and caring. (Teacher)

My students are mostly Chinese with some Polish and some from Afghanistan. Many students have businesses and want to speak English to their customers. Only a few students plan to go on to higher education. (Teacher)

The students in this part of the city especially need English training. In some cases they need to learn basic skills such as writing, reading, and math. They are bored by lecturing. They need to work on their own. (Teacher)

Basically the students are Spanish speakers; they are poor; and they come from Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador and Guatemala. Many students are on welfare. (Teacher)

They are pretty self-reliant. Sometimes they want help on how to do something or to know who to talk with to solve a problem. (Teacher)

Many students are shy at first. They get easily embarrassed until they are more confident. Most students are Spanish speakers. They are mostly very poor and many are on welfare. The students want to learn to speak, and they like to have conversation more than anything else. (Aide)

We have a cross-section of students here. Some are very limited, and another group of students have degrees from other countries. These adults are easily discouraged and will leave if they are unhappy. (Teacher)

Most of my students are Mexican-American, but a few are Anglo, Black, from Vietnam, or from Laos. Most of the students need ESL and come during the day. The men from other countries come to class at night. (Teacher)

My students need language skills, they need help in reading, writing, and speaking. They want to learn English to improve in their jobs. (Teacher)

Those who stay are hard workers: They work all day just like I do, and then they come back here, so we kind of have a lot in common. (Teacher)

They are all ages, 19 to 60. The morning classes consist mostly of women, young or middle-aged. They take their children to school and then come to school themselves. (Teacher)

The attribute of respect is one of the main differences in high school and adult students. Once we start class, they listen, ask, try to converse . . . they really try. (Teacher)

If somebody's speaking they will wait until he's through--they just don't interfere [interrupt] just for the sake of it--they have respect for each other and the teacher--it's tremendous. I have as many as six different nationalities in one classroom, a total of 25-27 students. (Teacher)

It's not just minorities . . . or poverty schools.

There are lots of kids that come from middle class families that the mother and the father have a good paying job yet they don't have a GED. (Supervisor)

The first time I taught ESL, I had 16 different countries represented. (Supervisor)

They have a desire to learn and have returned for it. Most are working people, but low income. Others want to work if they could get a chance. (Teacher)

Most students are apprehensive at the beginning because they have been out of school for awhile. They are eager to learn--appreciate anything you teach them. This year they are younger because of the bad economy; more are coming to school. The older ones have more questions about what they are reading and are looking for more reassurance. (Teacher)

Lower socio-economic groups tend to be very present oriented--they can't learn language overnight and they are frustrated. Some were recently laid off; they have time on their hands so many come to the center. Many are frustrated people because many have had long work records. (Teacher)

I had to do a lot of smiling and hope it was contagious. (Teacher)

These people have experienced failure--so be careful--class can be threatening. (Teacher)

This is much different teaching. I'm spoiled because people are here because they want to learn. (Teacher)

They are: Mothers (single, married, unwed); single people who have had traumatic things in their life; foreign students; different cultures; some are on welfare; some are more dependent. One reason they are here is because they don't want to be dependent on others. (Teacher)

There are no stereotypes in GED. Things change daily. People's lives are so full of activities. (Teacher)

The Needs of Students

It was most informative to listen to teachers talk about the needs of their students. They did not categorize them as slow, ignorant, lazy, or rebellious. In fact, they did not categorize them at all. They constantly spoke of their adult students as individuals. With needs that varied according to their individual backgrounds and present life tasks. There were only two things that they seemed to have in common--a need for educational help in order to cope with life and a fear or uncertainty about performing in a classroom.

A few statements made by teachers during the on-site interviews give insight into the teachers' perception of student needs. These are presented below.

Their needs are very basic needs--like how to live with life as it is now. They want to learn how to depend on themselves and not others. (Teacher)

They are all different yet they all have the same need--they are all a little unsure of themselves. They are not sure what is going to happen to them when they walk into the classroom--how they will be accepted by students and teachers. (Aide)

My students are mostly 60-69 years of age. They want to learn budgeting, consumer skills, socialization skills, and learn why the government does what it does. They have developed a "family" atmosphere and check when someone is absent. (Teacher)

Students need help with child care; they need to improve their self-concept; they need help with math and with basic punctuation skills. Here they improve their self-concepts. They learn that somebody cares about them and that there is a place they can come to get help. (Teacher)

They need to learn how to make inferences and to judge what is being done so they don't feel intimidated. (Teacher)

Most of my students are very poor, Mexican-American, have a low self-image, are courteous and thoughtful. (Teacher)

One group of students is mostly women who are in their 30's and 40's who dropped out of school. Now they are working and need a GED to get a better job. Another group already has the high school diploma but needs to brush up on just one area like math. Some are very low

level; they can barely read. (Supervisor)

The students like teacher feedback. Some are young students. They often come from poor homes. Not many have had much success in their past. They have poor self-concepts. They respond well. (Teacher)

If students were doing well up until the time they dropped out in the ninth or tenth grade, then they usually don't have far to go. If, however, they tuned out back at the end of the sixth grade, they have a lot farther to go . . . . Somewhere along the way they just got lost--whether it was peer pressure or whatever. (Teacher)

Special attention should be given to the need of most students for reassurance and encouragement. Their self-confidence, especially in an educational situation, is usually quite low. Many have experienced failures of one kind or another in school settings. Even if they have not, their perception of their lack of formal schooling, inability to speak English well, or their "being too old to learn" tends to promote feelings of inadequacy. For most it was very difficult to approach the adult basic education program and admit their need for help.

The insight of teachers into this special need of adult basic education students for self-confidence was one of the most striking aspects of the interviews with teachers. A few of their comments are presented below.

They are frightened. Often they will call up on the phone and pretend they are looking for help for a friend. Who wants to admit they have been out of school for 15 or 20 years and are afraid to go back? (Teacher)

Most of them need a lot of encouragement to overcome the fear of going back to school. They are frightened. I would do everything I could to make them feel comfortable. I would not give them any pretest when they came in. (Teacher)

They are scared; they are in a foreign country, literally. When I said we would get another teacher, they said they would not come if I did not teach . . . . First, you've got to be friends with them. (Aide)

They are nice people. They are for the most part hard working. Many are downtrodden; many are frustrated, intimidated, beaten. They are not afraid to work. They see themselves frequently as failures. (Teacher)

TEACHERS

Sixty-six teachers were personally interviewed by project staff. Most of these interviews were conducted at the learning center or classroom site of the teacher. Although some effort was made to reach teachers in outlying areas, most of the teachers interviewed worked near the co-op site or in a learning center. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that the vast majority of those interviewed were women (80%). Male teachers tend to work part-time in ABE and to teach in outlying programs.

Most of the teachers appeared to be in their thirties (43%), forties (25%), or fifties (17%). A few were in their late twenties, and one or two were over sixty. Approximately 60% were Anglo with the rest equally divided among Blacks and Hispanics. Most had teaching certificates although a few did have educational backgrounds in areas such as math, music, or other social sciences. A third of the teachers had earned advanced degrees, and many were currently taking graduate courses. A few did not have baccalaureate degrees. (Although most individuals without degrees were officially listed as aides, in many instances it was difficult to distinguish such individuals from teachers. This issue will be discussed more fully below in the section on aides.) Although most of the teachers did have some formal training in education, only two or three had such preparation in adult education.

Over half of the teachers indicated they had less than 5 years experience in teaching adults. Few had planned on working with adults but had more or less "stumbled" into this work in a variety of ways. Many had been recommended by a friend or had been looking for part-time teaching when they were suddenly introduced to adult basic education. A significant number spoke of their initial hesitancy to accept this task of teaching adults, but many more voiced their present enthusiasm with their jobs. Nearly 30% had taught in ABE for 5 to 10 years, and approximately 17% had been involved in ABE for longer than a decade.

The following are a number of mini-sketches of teachers who were interviewed during the course of the evaluation.

I've worked in ABE for 15 years, but I really began teaching literacy to adults back in the late 1930's. I've got my bachelors and masters in Special Education. (Black female about 60 years old)

When I became disabled, I left my job and began working in ABE half-time. When I regained my health, I went back to my full-time position with Texas Rehab, but I still teach GED 2 nights a week. (Anglo female of 55)

I am a military instructor during the day and teach retarded adults at night. I have a masters degree in Sociology and Curriculum and want to work on a doctorate in psychology. This is my first year in ABE. (Anglo male of 37)

Elementary education was my undergrad major and I taught school for years. I began in ABE in 1975 as a part-timer and now am full time working from 7:30 to 4:30. I really want to continue working in ABE, but sometimes I wonder how long the funding will last. (Anglo female about 52)

I have a BBA and some graduate courses in business but no formal education in adult education. I have participated in a number of workshops on teaching adults though. For 11 years I taught business, social studies, and language arts in a public high school. Now I've worked in ABE for 8 years and have taught on both the ABE and GED levels. Presently I am teaching at a half-way house. (Black female of 40)

Lead teacher is my title here at this center. I have an MS in counseling and an MA in art and education. I've been working in adult education about 4 years. My interest in the field started when I was the Director of Special Education in Corpus Christi. There were a lot of adults there that I worked with, and I became interested in their needs. I get so excited about teaching that sometimes students think I am angry. When they get to know me they enjoy this excitement. I have had some experience working with the handicapped adults at Good Will Industries and at the State Hospital. I have taken graduate courses in adult education and am presently taking a course on computer programming and another one in Spanish. (Anglo male about 35)

My MS is in counseling. I have no formal training in adult education but have attended many workshops. I got into adult education when as a

Catholic nun, I was a religious education teacher and started teaching the parents of my CCD kids that could not read or write. My full-time job now is teaching math and science in a high school, but I have also been a volunteer for the literacy council for several years. When working with adults, I try to provide success for each one each day. I do this by calling on them, planning with them, checking their work, and just talking with them. (Anglo female about 48)

My BA is in elementary education with a bilingual endorsement, but I am now working on an MA in adult education. I've worked in adult education for about 12 years teaching ABE, GED, and ESL. Originally I was an ESL student at this very center! I got a scholarship to go to college and after I earned my bachelor's degree I came back to work here. Now I'm the center director. (Hispanic female about 33)

I have been teaching for 5 years, 3 years in ABE/ESL. I volunteered for 1 year and developed ESL program at the high school before I got into the ABE program. I developed the program through books, literature, and correspondence with other schools about ESL programs. The teacher in my opinion must be primarily a facilitator.

I am a part-time teacher who works full-time as a counselor with TEC. Before I retired from the Air Force, I taught Spanish. Then I began working with the CETA program through TEC, found out about ABE, and began volunteering.

My BS is in elementary education, and now I am working on my MA in elementary education. I have no formal adult education training but have participated in in-service programs. I have worked in ABE for 2 years. part-time. Much of the time I work with the illegals, helping them with citizenship, getting a driving license, and helping them to converse and with other ABE skills. My students keep motivated, I think, because I brag about them, have the director listen to their progress, show off the student's progress to the other students, and tell the family of the students when they do well. (Hispanic female in late 30's)

I'm a part-time teacher who has worked in adult education for 6 years. I have a masters in bilingual education and sociology. I was curious of what it would be like to teach adults. At first I was nervous because most of the students were older than I was. (Hispanic male of 45)

Elementary school teaching is my full-time job. But I was going through a divorce and needed some help with the financial stress. I love teaching adults; you can be honest with adults. And I found out they were more insecure than I was! They treat each other nice; they are all in the same boat. They could understand my situation too so we have all become friends. Funny thing about teaching, you learn more than you teach. (Hispanic female in mid 20's)

I teach in the local middle school so I've had some of our young adult students or their brothers or sisters in class. That helps to know them and their problems. A friend told me about ABE so I gave up my other part-time job to teach math to adults. I am working on a second masters; the first was in sociology. This one is in guidance. Besides teaching full-time in the local school district, I teach ABE 2 nights a week, attend college 1 night, and work part time as a cashier at Eckerd's. (Black female in her 30's)

I was working in a neighboring school district but came to this learning center when it opened in 1969. I took numerous credit and non-credit short courses in adult education from the mid '60s on and finally earned my B.A. in 1978. Now I am the learning center director. (Anglo female in her 50's)

I got into ABE because I saw education as an essential component to the development of the area. My full-time job is technical assistance for the Coastal Bend Council of Governments. Adult education is so important to that work. I teach in the ABE program 1 or 2 nights a week and on Saturdays. (Anglo female about 40)

I have a high school diploma plus 38 hours of college. I was an aide in elementary school program when asked by the principal to start an adult education class. I first got into school work when I phoned the superintendent to tell him my sons were being treated fairly in the schools. This was at a time when the district was being investigated. He said the district needed bilingual aides and offered me a job. I had been working as a maid at a motel. (Hispanic female in her 50's)

Students' View of Teachers

Students' comments about their teachers were extremely positive. When pressed for details as to why they felt so good about their teachers, most students responded by commenting on the interpersonal skills of the teacher or on the practicality of their teaching.

Over and over again the adult learners marvelled at the genuine concern for people that show through in the teachers' actions. "They take time to answer my questions and to explain things--sometimes two or three times!" The wonder in their voices testified to the fact that many of these adults were not used to having anyone think enough of them to give that kind of care and attention to them. Many of the adult students were careful to explain that this concern did not mean that their teachers wasted a lot of time or did not do much teaching. No, they showed them what they needed to learn and how to learn it. They explained, they encouraged, they taught; but in the process, they listened, they laughed, and they modeled the type of behavior the students wanted to imitate.

When talking of what they learned, the adult students usually gave examples of practical skills. Learning to use the telephone, to write checks, to pick out good buys, and to read the newspaper were the skills these adult learners needed and wanted. That was what their good teachers taught them. However, in the process they made it clear that the responsibility for learning was the students, not the teachers. What made the students marvel was that at the same time the teachers laid the responsibility for learning on the students shoulders, they also convinced these adult learners that they could succeed at learning.

To allow the students to speak for themselves, a number of their comments about their teachers and their teaching methods are reported below.

> The teacher really helps me to learn. She explains a lot more than they did when I was in high school. She explains how to get the answer and goes over it with me.
>
> The teacher helps because she understands. Both teachers help me. The teacher helps by writing on the blackboard, reading, and writing. The teacher talks about jobs, how to order in a restaurant. This helps a lot.
>
> The teacher is very helpful. She is a good role model. She talks about her life. We like that. If the teacher laughs and is friendly, we can learn English. If the teacher is angry, we can't learn.
>
> The teacher lets the students talk to each other. She explains things pretty wisely. She puts them into pretty easy terms. She gives you the space you need. The teacher comes around and sees if you need help. She's trying to find out where I'm at.
>
> The teacher helps me to learn. She goes over things to make sure that I understand. Mostly the students work on their own. The teacher always asks if the students are coming back the next class.
>
> This teacher has patience. She wants you to learn. She is interested in you learning. She makes me feel good because she is neat and honest.
>
> The teacher really helps me to learn. She encourages me a lot. She talks about the lesson in other ways beyond using the book. I like the teacher to talk about her experiences; it gives me hints.
>
> She lets the students work as fast as they want. She gives the students her attention. I like it when there aren't many students.
>
> The teacher leaves me alone when I want her to, yet the teacher is available when I need help. I thinks the teacher gives me incentive. That is really helpful.
>
> The teacher is friendly and makes the students know that they can do the work and pass the GED test. The teacher helps me to believe in myself.
>
> The teacher helps me to learn. However, she has a lot of pupils and doesn't always have a chance to talk to all of the students. She is nice, and if I get stuck, the teacher explains from the bottom to the top.
>
> The teacher explains when I get stuck. She is a nice school teacher.
>
> The teacher really helps me to learn. She is always telling me to think positive, not negative. The teacher gives the students compliments and

encouragement.

I really think the teacher helps me to learn because he is very patient and explains everything and helps us keep up with the class.

The teacher helps the students by giving many good ideas, by helping them with English grammar, and by teaching them social studies and science. The teacher has a lot of students, sometimes 25 students are in his class.

The teacher explains things to the students, she teaches them to read and write, to talk on the phone. She never pushes them.

I feel teachers are responsible for my success. They are very patient. They treat me like a regular student even though my needs and abilities are very different.

I feel free to ask her anything. This teacher has been through the program herself.

They seem concerned about you . . . in school they would help you because it was their job, but here they want to see you do good.

The teachers here are so patient with me . . . . They help me with anything; they answer my questions.

I think they're the best teachers I've ever come in contact with. Everyone here is so good. They're kinder, more understanding, more patient.

If they don't have the information you need, they'll find it for you.

They're more interested in people as human beings. They don't try to shove a round peg into a square hole.

The learning center director was very perceptive about my difficulties with the diagnostic tests the first day I came in. Her caring made it possible for me to save face and continue coming.

They got some nice teachers--they know how to teach you! Like they give students what they need. They really educate; they don't give you anything. You have to learn it. You are responsible.

They take time out to help you.

Everyday is like the first day on the job--she is excited. She's a real sharp cookie. She takes a real personal interest in every student.

There isn't enough of her to go around.

Teachers are very helpful; they don't make you feel dumb. They provide all the help you need. They are never tired; they don't make it look like a job. They won't let you fail.

Full-Time and Part-Time Employed

The employment status of teachers in adult basic education has long been a serious concern. In the early days of the program, few staff members were full-time employees of the ABE program. Even many of the directors worked part-time in adult education and part time in another or several other positions. However, in the decade since Texas began contributing state funds to the basic education program for adults, there has been a continuous growth in the number of directors, mid-management specialists, and teachers employed full time. Many have pointed to this as a sign of the "coming of age" of the program. It certainly has provided some basic job security to many ABE staff members and established the initial foundations of career ladders for the profession.

A disturbing note picked up during the course of the evaluation study were several comments by co-op directors concerning a movement away from full-time employment of teachers. With the growth of student numbers and tightening of funds and with prospects of major increases in teacher salaries in Texas, several directors admitted that they had made or were contemplating cuts in the number of full-time staff. They admitted concerns that such a move would weaken the local program but stated that several teachers employed part-time could cover the same number of students at less cost than a full-time employee. Other directors maintained that this would be the last area in which they would make cuts because their full-time teachers were vital to the program.

A commonly accepted definition of a full-time employee in adult basic education seems to be "someone who is paid for more than 29 hours of work per week." While the majority of teachers are employed 4 or 5 hours a week

to teach two class sessions, numerous others follow varied work schedules. Those teaching in learning centers do tend to be employed more hours per week, usually averaging 12 to 20 hours per week minimum.

Local conditions frequently dictate staffing patterns. At least one supervisor commented on the difficulty of finding qualified people in his area that were willing to work part-time. Another comment revealed that some directors believe that the type and timing of classes in their areas are not conducive to staffing by full-time people. Others have found unique ways of using staff in flexible ways as can be seen from the following description of the staffing pattern of one learning center. The director holds a full-time, salaried position on "minimum foundation." (This means that her contract follows salary and benefit conditions of the local school district personnel.) The learning center also employs two "full-time" (30-hours-per-week) teachers and two part-time (6-hours-per-week) teachers. In addition, five aides are employed 40 hours per week. The staff of the learning center also serve neighboring communities by holding classes in various outreach locations. This type of staffing pattern was fairly common in programs visited with several learning center directors indicating that teachers employed on a part-time basis were generally assigned only to outreach locations.

The major employment concern of many teachers was the permanence of their jobs. Changes in staffing patterns are due not only to rises and falls in enrollment but also to variations in client groups and funding levels. Other areas of concern voiced by several staff members were the absence of health insurance and paid vacation time for most ABE employees. The following are sample comments.

> Christmas vacation was really rough. There was no check coming in for 2 weeks--and at a time when you really need a little extra cash.

> My friends are shocked that I work for a system that provides no health insurance benefits.

> Being able to get only 11 hours of teaching in a week makes it hard to put bread on the table.

> Did you hear? This year for the first time we are getting five days of paid vacation time! . . . Other benefits would be nice.

Because of the statewide concern with the full- verses part-time employment status of teachers, the evaluation team inquired frequently of those being interviewed about their view of the differences between such teachers. About 65% of the respondents indicated that they felt there were distinct differences between the two groups. They felt the full-timers were better informed about ABE methods, materials, and resources, had time to plan, had more continuity with the program, and move students through a program more quickly. In some programs the big difference was seen in that the full-time employed did all the paper work and kept the records. The 35% who saw little or no difference between the two groups spoke of the dedication and the teaching methods of the two groups being the same. Sample comments are listed below.

> I have had experience both as a full-time and part-time teacher and I can say: You are better served by full-time people. (Teacher)

> The kind of job done is up to the teacher; if she is good, use her any way you can. (A teacher who had taught both full- and part-time)

> How can a part-time teacher who has worked all day long [at another job] concentrate on a student? We need more full-time teachers. (Aide)

> I don't see that much difference. They don't function differently. Their dedication is the same. (A learning center director whose part-time people have taught for many years)

> Full-time teachers have more time for planning. Their teaching flow is continuous, not interrupted. But I like having part-time teachers because their attention span is better. (Teacher)

> The full-time teachers have more time with students, and their students get their GED's quicker. (Aide)

> The full-time teacher does all of the record keeping, and she has a little more responsibility. Otherwise there is not any difference between full- and part-time teachers. (Teacher)

> The person whose first obligation is to adult education [i.e., the full-time teacher] is going to do a better job. (Supervisor)

I feel that our full-time people are our biggest asset because it is extremely hard on students to come in to an unfamiliar teacher. And it's hard on the teachers to just drop-in to the learning center. Our full-time people are better informed and better able to help our students. (Aide)

There's no difference--it's the person. Being interested in the individual [learner] makes the difference. (Teacher)

Full-time teachers work best in the learning center. (Teacher)

There is a distinction between old part-time and new part-time teachers in terms of differences in teaching methodologies. New teachers need time to get used to teaching adults. (Teacher)

Dedication and Commitment of the Teaching Staff

ABE teachers are committed to their jobs and to helping people. They often work in harsh environments, at low salaries, and with a clientele that has been rejected by much of society. Initially, many got into the program almost accidently and frequently because they needed supplemental income, but as one teacher said: "Those who do it for the money don't last long." Perhaps the key to much of their motivation is that most of these people love to teach. As they describe how they finally found the right technique to help someone who was having difficulty learning and as they describe how the adult student's face lighted up, their own faces reflect the joy and excitement of the students whom they are describing. Thus, while their commitment may be difficult to describe, it is easy to recognize. To share this insight, a number of comments gleaned from the interviews are presented below.

It is a fascinating field! We love our jobs. When you teach in schools, you sometimes feel like a jailer. With adults it's the opposite feeling. Yesterday a man said: "Thank you for your patience" when I was helping him with math. Imagine that--a grown man thanking me for teaching him something! (A young teacher)

And then when you've gone over something two, three times and wait a while to come up with the same question and they come up with the answer, Oh, you should see the smiles on their face! (An experienced teacher)

We have a very important job to do; we're just spread too thin to do it." (A teacher who felt she could handle well up to 25 ESL students)

I'll find that, golly, I get so much more of value than I give from them because they need to know they are doing the right thing, and I can show them how good it is for them to be here and that they are doing the right thing. (Aide)

ABE needs loving, caring people in the program. When directors look for new teachers, they should recruit people first, teachers second. (Teacher)

I tell the students that once they get their GED my door is not closed. I will always be here to talk or help them. (Teacher)

Once I get here, the time goes so quickly, I don't really feel that let down until I get home because there are so many things happening that it's certainly never boring. (Teacher)

The students seem so nice. It makes me feel good. (Teacher)

I supplement my income in various ways so that I can afford to stay on this job. (Aide)

I'm 74 years old, and I haven't gotten tired of it [adult education] yet. (Supervisor)

You have to believe that no matter what a person's level is when they come in, there has to be hope for them; there has to be an ability to progress . . . I've seen it happen time and again. (Aide)

I like the excitement on their face when they learn something and realize that they can do it! . . . It's not a job! They're an enjoyment because they are here to learn. (Teacher)

We're on the same level--adult to adult--and that leads to self-direction. They do all kinds of things for us; for example, when we went to 3 hour sessions per night they starting bringing in food . . . . If this were full-time, I would never go back into the regular classroom . . . . They're beautiful people. (Teacher)

Sure I can use the money, but I teach because I enjoy working with adults--they are eager to learn. They buy books, do extra reading. During the day, I cannot get kids to open books. (Teacher)

It's something you don't get tired of. You enjoy seeing their progress. (Teacher)

It's not a tiring program. If you enjoy teaching, this is the program to teach in . . . . You can see the impact after several years. (Teacher)

How long will I be teaching? All my life. (Teacher)

I teach because it is an outlet. I enjoy interacting with people I don't have to pastor. Financially it helps, but that's secondary. I enjoy the people because they are excited about learning. I don't want to teach kids anymore. (Teacher)

It's gratifying--that's why I'm in it. (Teacher)

If we don't look ahead, we're going to be left behind! (Teacher)

I found my outlook on life didn't agree with the business world. I wanted to help someone else. Now I have lots of opportunity to work with people, but I need to improve my communication. I'm trying to find what I can do to help people--to find something that will help them help better themselves. (Teacher)

Everyone is a human being. (Teacher)

I'm still in the learning process--I'm trying to learn more, I'm not complete yet! (Teacher)

I had this desire since I was a child. I ran away from home so I could go to school . . . . It's so nice, I'll stick with it after I don't need the money. (Teacher)

A teacher can serve as role model . . . . I came from this community . . . . I was the eleventh child of a widowed mother. My students can see that I got a degree; this gives them an opportunity to see that education is something you can do without making yourself something different, i.e., stuck up. (Teacher)

I learned a lot; it's been a good year for learning . . . . I now approach the parents of my fifth grade students differently--now I relate differently to students. I also now have the background to know how parents view teachers. (Teacher)

I like it because of the challenge and the people. It's not work--I feel more refreshed when I finish. I'm here because I want to be. In high school they teach you, in adult education you teach yourself. (Teacher)

As a result of teaching in ABE, I now have a better understanding of people and of the hardships of life. I feel that I have had an impact. I feel good if someone now knows something that they didn't before because of me. (Teacher)

Compensation for Instructional Duties

The vast majority of instructional personnel are paid on an hourly rate. Of those that are salaried, a general principle might be stated: their pay schedules approximate the pay schedules of similar teachers in the public schools or colleges of their locale. However, no such general principle can be stated for those paid by hourly rates. Some co-ops reimburse personnel on varied structure rates based on amount of education and length of employment in adult education. Others try to adapt compensation to local school district rates. However, most co-ops have one fixed rate that applies to all certified teachers. The recent graduate who is teaching adults for the first time is paid the same hourly rate as the experienced teacher who has taught both children and adults for years.

The rate of pay may have some effect on recruitment of new teachers or on turnover rates among the less experienced. In some situations it seems to prevent young people who would like to make a profession out of teaching adults from seriously considering such an occupation. However, among experienced adult education teachers, rate of pay seems to be more an irritant than to be a strong motivational factor. The statements from teachers interviewed that are given below testify to this.

I love it [teaching adults]. The other teachers I work with also love it. I think it's because students really encourage you. In past, I worked with some who loved it and with others who were there for money; the money people usually left pretty quickly. (Teacher)

The positive strokes keep us there, but we also like to eat. The program doesn't seem to value education. We spent several thousand on our education; give us some security in return. [Local co-op is moving away from full-time teachers.] (A teacher who works 11 hours per week)

If I was doing it strictly for the money, they wouldn't have enough to pay me. I do it to help people. (Teacher)

I have been very satisfied with the program, even when the pay was low. It has provided me with lots of satisfaction. (Teacher)

Definitely, I do not do this for the money! This is a break for me; I like to teach. I'm feeling good about what I'm doing and feel that I am helping. (Teacher)

I love it; I probably would do it without the money. These people are like family--we don't have any turnover out here. Yea, the money is nice, but . . . . What this job really takes is a lot of patience; and the real payment is when the students show their appreciation. (Teacher)

An excellent teacher teaches herself out of a job. She graduates students, and when the class falls below the state minimum, she loses her job. Add to this the $8.00 per hour pay, and you can see why it's hard to get people sometimes. (Supervisor)

If you're talking about tangible benefits, there aren't any! I realize I get paid $8.50 an hour. For me, this is my gift to humanity. There is no sick leave, no retirement, no anything. (Teacher)

People should be able to go into adult education and expect a reasonable standard of living. The state and federal government is making a terrible mistake by not putting more money into it because everybody in the community benefits from the work we do. (A teacher planning to teach English in another country)

Instructional and Clerical Aides

The aide is a vital part of the staffing pattern in many ABE programs. Many of them have gone through the local GED program themselves and have returned to work in the program. Their abilities to relate to the students--especially incoming, minority students--and to point to their own successes in the program as a motivational tool were frequently noted by supervisors. A surprising large percentage of the aides were enrolled in a college program where they intended to earn their own teaching certificate some day. All aides observed during the on-site visits were female.

Several thumbnail sketches of aides are presented below to provide insights into the kinds of individuals working as aides in ABE programs.

This woman is a 32-year-old Mexican-American who has a high school diploma. She has had 13 years experience in adult education and has taught at this particular center for 2 years. She works full-time and is treated as a regular teacher handling ESL classes by herself. In the past she has worked with certified teachers as an aide in ABE, ESL, and GED programs.

This 26-year-old Black woman works 20 hours a week in adult basic education. She also attends college majoring in business. She has 8 years experience as an aide in GED classes.

This aide began as a volunteer with a Department of Human Resources program. She operates a program in which students who have completed a GED or high school diploma can take a variety of business courses below the college level. She can be characterized as a lifelong learner and has been active in various kinds of learning activities. In her mid-40's, she has now completed 2 years of college.

Since she herself had been through the ABE/GED program, this aide identifies strongly with adult students. She remembers that one of her own greatest fears was that she would be the only one of her age in the program.

This aide has been working in ABE for 5 1/2 years. She received her GED through this same program and now has 18 hours of college credit. At first she worked as a volunteer but was then put on the payroll. She works with students, does "induction" tasks, and helps with record-keeping. In her instructional role, she works mainly with non-readers by getting them started in appropriate materials.

After an illness, this former music teacher

began working at a learning center because she was acquainted with the director. She is primarily responsible for record-keeping and other clerical work. She had gone to a "commercial college" in the 1930's and feels this training as well as here experience are useful at the learning center.

This middle-aged Hispanic was acting as an aide in the local school district when her principal asked her to start an adult education program. She now teaches a class of 39 ESL students and has not had a single dropout in the first 5 months of this year. She eagerly attends all the adult education training she can and is enrolled in a college degree program.

Duties and Functions of Aides

The most difficult part of interviewing or observing aides on the job was to distinguish them from certified teachers. In many situations they are practically indistinguishable because the only difference between aides and teachers is the rate at which they are paid. This is especially true in many learning centers and in some classes held in outreach centers. In fact, at one of the visited learning centers, all full-time instructional people, including the learning center director, were or had been at one time undegreed personnel. Often these aides are working at some of the more difficult instructional tasks such as teaching reading to the adult non-readers or conversational English to the non-English speaker. Although there was some recognition on the part of supervisors that aides had not had all of the professional training that they could use and that they would probably be better instructors if they had had such education, aides were just as frequently pointed to as "top teachers." In other programs aides filled roles which are more traditionally considered their function. Since beginning readers and English speakers need much individualized instruction, many teachers and directors sought aides for this task. Occasionally program leaders found volunteers to fill this role.

The following comments taken from interviews are offered as a means of providing a fuller picture of this mixed role played by many adult basic education aides.

I have a teacher aide who doesn't have a degree, yet she is my top reading teacher for a group that is just beginning, a non-readers group. She's good, and yet she doesn't have that certificate. (Supervisor)

My duties include: teaching a class in "positive motivation" (coping skills) 4 days a week at a local half-way house; teaching the same class 2 days a week for TRC referrals at the learning center; working individually with MHMR clients; teaching a class in business skills; and supervising GED students who are working on self-paced, individualized materials. (Aide)

The aides in this program do basically the same thing that the teachers do. (Supervisor)

At one church site, the secretary of the church is the aide. (Supervisor)

Our aides are used for testing, developing individual worksheets, issuing books, and so forth. (Teacher)

My aide is used for grading papers, to assist in individual instruction, and for such related items. (Teacher)

I have had aides in the past. Now I have no aide but do have a retired teacher who volunteers and works with one student who needs assistance. Another retired teacher teaches ESL once a week. (Teacher)

This program has no aides but it would be of benefit if they did. I would like help in organizing material for each student. (Teacher)

The aides in this program are treated like teachers. (Teacher)

She has no aides, but would like one. She feels the state should provide them. (Teacher)

They have two paraprofessional aides who serve as teachers. (Teacher)

They do not have any aides but have talked about using volunteers from the church that they use for their teaching facility. She would like aides to help individuals on certain days and to help those new to the class. (Teacher)

They have one aide. She is used as a regular teacher, and she has her own classes. (Teacher)

They have no aides but she would like one. Sometimes they have the help of volunteers. (Teacher)

She has two volunteer aides; one is her mother. (Teacher)

They have three aides; each is assigned to a teacher. They are used to help students review and are not used for clerical needs. (Teacher)

The advantages of aides are that they can reinforce teacher, individualize, and provide clerical help. Disadvantages are they are not used to full potential. Relations with a teacher improve if both are oriented to what an aide can do--besides catch as catch can. (Aide)

They can be very useful. The teacher's time is limited and the aide can keep the teacher in the classroom--teaching. (Teacher)

I work in a classroom with a degreed teacher. I also help in the learning center and hold some basic education classes myself. We work with the mentally retarded and mentally ill. In the afternoons I teach a class for alcoholics. I work on self-confidence, and many who never would have thought of it have gotten their GED's. At night, I teach ESL at the junior college. (Aide)

In some instances the aides definitely served in paraprofessional or clerical roles. Their instructional duties most frequently involved individualized or small group tutoring. Clerical duties ranged from receptionist, typist, and computer technician to test administrator, counselor, and advisor to teachers regarding materials. Even the clerical aides played vital roles in the overall program, and many were not adverse to stepping into an instructional role when there was no teacher available.

Perhaps some insight into the role and functions of clerical aides can be gleaned from the short sketches provided below.

I went through the Competency Based High School Diploma program here at the learning center. Just about the time I finished up, they were advertising for a secretary. I applied for the job and got it. That was in 1982. (A 35-year-old woman who performs clerical tasks including computer record keeping and some teaching tasks such as testing and material recommendation.)

A secretaries job is to coordinate things between the learning center and the rest of the co-op. We do things like keep track of personnel, records, and payroll . . . . Our local college business office has a person handling grants and that makes things much easier for us. Following TEA regulations was much harder before. (One of the program's two secretaries)

We don't have any aides in the classroom. They do the clerical work. I get very good service from them; they are very systematic. (Teacher)

ADMINISTRATORS

During the on-site visits the evaluation team interviewed dozens of co-op directors, supervisors, and learning center directors. Insights gained through such interviews are presented below.

Co-op Directors

All co-op directors visited work full time in adult education. One, however, split his time between adult basic and community education programs. Several had been in adult education before state funding began in 1974 although the majority marked that time as their entry into the co-op director position. Only two had less than 10 years experience as director.

The backgrounds of the directors varied greatly. Three had been coaches when assigned the job of co-op director. None of the three had had prior experience with adult education nor with administrative duties. Another had been working in an anti-poverty program when asked to direct the program. Several had been teachers of various subjects in the local school district programs, but only one of them had had administrative training or experience. One female director had moved into her position from that of directing a volunteer program for adults. The inadequacy of their background and training was spoken of by several directors. A few did take classes at universities, and at least three of the directors interviewed had earned master degrees in management or adult education.

The background, training, and educational philosophy of the individual as well as the size and location of the co-op have a lot to do with the way a co-op director defines his or her job. Some definitely saw themselves in the traditional role of the top administrator, i.e., primarily a manager or coordinator. Others give more emphasis to the program building role with such tasks as assessing needs, initiating programs, securing funds, and evaluating. Still others identified themselves primarily as teachers or public relations specialists with the major task of building an awareness of the potential impact of adult education on the community. The overall impression of the evaluation team was that the duties of the co-op director were indeed complex and called for a variety of management and educational skills together with great adeptness in interpersonal skills.

The statements below offer a synopsis of the way five co-op directors saw the major tasks of their position.

> Getting the most out of state and federal grants to deliver instructional services to the community is my major task. Right now I am more concerned with getting services out into the surrounding communities and not with just building up our center here. (Co-op director)

> I see myself performing many tasks. First, I deliver programs in compliance with the rules and regulations of the state. Second, I must make sure the program is accountable and that we stay within the funding regulations. Third, I must thoroughly know the rules because this lets me react to situations immediately. Fourth, I am responsible for evaluation--to set the goals and follow through. Fifth, I do long term goal setting. You can not be effective without knowing the rules and doing good planning. (Co-op director)

> My major task is to coordinate the total program; that is, all the programs in adult education. This includes hiring, recruiting, promoting. I see my job as a program facilitator--I do a lot of delegating of responsibility. (Co-op director)

> My main job is to see that classes are functioning properly. I try to get to each class location once a month. Co-op staff development is a difficult part of my job. Budgeting is not hard because the service center staff takes care of most of that. (Co-op director)

> One of the major tasks here has been educating the people I work with--educating principals to the value of teaching adults, educating the community to the need for adult education, educating our liaison people, the people here on the college campus and even the local advisory committee. (Co-op director)

Other Administrative Personnel

It is much more difficult to categorize or characterize other administrative personnel in the adult education program. More than a dozen individuals holding mid-management

positions were interviewed during on-site visits. However, no clear picture of their role in the ABE program seemed to emerge. One of the major distinctions identified was the full- or part-time employment status. The full-timers seemed to be assigned higher level administrative tasks and to be exercising greater leadership roles in the program. Many of the part-timers, on the other hand, had little professional identification with the ongoing program. Another major distinction among mid-level administrators appeared to be their perception of which system employed them. While the majority did see themselves working for the ABE program, some clearly identified themselves with the school system or program that paid the major portion of their salary. These individuals were frequently selected by the local superintendent or some administrator other than the co-op director. Although this separation of mid-management personnel according to full- and part-time status and perceived supervisor in general does distinguish among job roles performed in ABE, it should be noted that in some instances this distinction does not hold true. Some part-time administrators were well integrated into the program and performed vital administrative roles.

Because of the varied employment status and assignments of mid-management personnel in the ABE programs of Texas, it is quite difficult to describe the typical duties performed by these individuals. Those employed full-time and integrated into the total co-op system tended to perform high level administrative tasks. Building programs, selecting and hiring staff, recruiting students, directing in-service education, and some involvement in the funding and budgeting process were typical duties of these individuals. These individuals were often identified as assistant directors or supervisors. Other individuals carried the title of director of the learning center or head teacher but performed very similar tasks. Their attention was more frequently directed to a specific program or center than to the total program of the co-op.

Although a variety of other administrative roles were noted, it is easiest to describe the duties of the part-time, "non-integrated" administrative assistant. Usually this individual's major responsibility was to supervise the instructional program in sites removed from the co-op center. Interaction with teachers, distribution of materials, and collection of records and forms seemed to be their essential tasks. Frequently they were also identified by the title of supervisor.

The following statements were taken from on-site interviews and are included here to provide additional insight into the role and duties of mid-level administrators in adult basic education programs. The quotations include both administrators' and teachers' descriptions of duties either performed or expected by mid-management personnel.

> I am a teacher specialist under the director. I do not teach but rather administer the program in the local area of the co-op. Recruiting students, setting up classes, working with teachers, as well as cooperating with the community education program are my major tasks. I am employed by the school district and have been in ABE for 6 years. Before that I taught reading in the junior high school. (Administrator)

> Getting books for teachers, handling time sheets, collecting attendance forms, and picking up materials like video tapes are the kind of things I do. I have to make sure classes are big enough and sometimes help with recruiting. I also do some evaluating. (Supervisor)

> I keep instructors informed; check on the job they are doing--to see if they are reaching students--and keep track of the paper work. (Supervisor)

> There is nothing in this learning center or in the surrounding communities that I am not responsible for when it comes to adult education. The co-op director lets me know how much money the co-op can supply for the year, but then I do everything else. I do the budgeting, the recruiting, the program planning, the hiring, the paper work--everything. We check the needs of the surrounding communities and set up programs for them too. All interagency cooperation is initiated by my staff. (Head teacher)

> Eight to ten hours a month is what I spend on ABE. That is enough for our small program. I usually can get most of this work in during the lunch hour or sometimes find one free night . . . . Now I am business manager for the school district. (Supervisor)

> My major task is to contact districts under my

jurisdiction and provide information and assist in setting up classes. I service the classes by doing such things as reports, arranging salaries, and checking attendance . . . . It takes 1 hour per day to cover the adult education function. Our area has four classes in operation. We are meeting GED needs mostly now, but I see a need for increasing ESL. (Supervisor)

I'm a full-time community education supervisor and part-time ABE supervisor. I had been with the district as a coach in 1973 when it pioneered the community education program. I see a natural link between ABE and community education. It takes a full-time person to promote the program. (Supervisor)

The co-op director works closely with me, but it is really my responsibility to run this learning center. I am responsible for all the administrative tasks from hiring and firing to counseling and testing. I need desperately all the administrative skills I can learn, but the most important thing always comes back to being able to deal with people. (Learning center director)

What do teachers expect of their administrators? Certainly they expect help with recruitment and materials. They see budgetary and administrative reporting as tasks of the administration. Most frequently they asked for support from supervisors. They expect their administrators to listen--to understand their needs and their problems. However, they want them to go beyond that. As one teacher said, "They hired me so they should take my side in problems." In the more positive sense, instructors expect administrators to set an atmosphere "so that teachers feel they have a professional group" to help clarify goals so teachers have vision and motivation in striving to eliminate illiteracy, to listen to the ideas of the teachers, and to share their insights with them and thus promote professional growth. The fact that some administrators defined their roles in terms of relating to others and acknowledged the need for interpersonal skills in carrying out their roles indicates their agreement with teachers in these vital areas.

A few statements of teachers regarding their expectations of the roles to be performed by administrators are included below.

I expect the administrator to recruit for the program and to get the materials I need. I expect a friendly but professional relationship so I can tell him what I and the students need and he can do something about it. He should support us in making local decisions. (Teacher)

The director has to be someone you can talk to--someone who will encourage us. She also needs to be the "spark" for the students and staff. (Aide)

I expect the administrator to go to bat for me in regard to budget needs. I want the assistance of the co-op director in goal setting and want to feel free to make suggestions that will help the adult student. I appreciate having an administrator to bounce ideas off of and to discuss problems with. (Teacher)

In the 2 years I have been working for the program, I have never seen an administrator. I'm not even sure who I am working for! It's nice that they trust us enough to do the job, but it sure would be nice to feel you are a part of something besides your own class. (Teacher)

The administrator needs to visit the classes, to listen to the concerns of people, to offer suggestions, and to be cooperative. They need to look out for teachers, get more materials, and ask teachers for recommendations. (Teacher)

PLANNING ABE PROGRAMS

Planning Policy

All of the co-ops visited had definite procedures in place for the development of their annual plans. In most localities the co-op director took complete responsibility for the initial development of the plan. However, the co-op coordinating committee was involved early in the process. Members of these committees throughout the state not only provided input into the formation of the plan but definitely had to give their approval to the final version for the co-op. In addition, nearly every director could also point to some type of needs assessment that was used to gain input for the planning process. Most of these, however, were informal and rather limited in their scope. Without a doubt the greatest impact on the planning process throughout the state is the requirement to fill out and submit to the Texas Education Agency an annual program plan.

Some general examples of the planning process as described by co-op directors are given below.

> We start our annual plan with a review of last year's program. We then add the input we get from our annual surveys of superintendents and businesses located throughout the co-op. This is compared to the plans developed at each of our learning centers. The coordinating board reviews and approves plan. (Co-op director)

> There are several factors that affect my procedure for developing an annual plan. (a) I use an experience base; that is, I begin with a review of past plans. (b) The training I got in management courses is useful to remind me of the actual steps that must be involved in planning. (c) Originally I planned using theory, but now I take a more balanced approach that includes experience. (d) We have built up a data base of evaluation evidence which can lead to refining of our objectives each year. (e) I organize the co-op according to these plans. To do this, I must get input from teachers, students, and other administrators. (Co-op director)

> First we are well aware of the local needs. But our local needs are so great in comparison to the money and other resources available, so we look again at legislative intent. The number one priority for our area then becomes obvious--it must be training in basic literacy skills. (Co-op director)

Problems in planning were also abundantly clear. Those observed during the on-site visits can be grouped in three areas: (a) the general absence of any long range, in-depth planning, (b) the difficulty of clarifying and including all components important to adult basic education in one unified program, and (c) gathering input from all relevant groups of people so that the planning process is not only comprehensive but also an instrument of garnering community support for the program.

A number of co-op directors were seriously disturbed by what they considered the inability to do any long-range planning under the present system. They felt that such planning had to be on a 2 or 3 year basis and that present regulations discouraged that. Two specific problems seemed to be involved. They had neither the time nor the staff to do broad based planning. Secondly, the annual allocation of state and federal funds made such multi-year planning senseless. Some of the statements made during the interviews are included below to clarify the thoughts of some co-op directors on this topic. As can be seen, at least one director did not even see the annual program plan as an aid in long range planning.

> In planning, the weakest areas are not doing good needs assessments and not doing real long-term planning. We are just doing the same thing year after year. But I would need full-time committed people to do this. Present regulations do not allow enough budget flexibility to do this. State regulations limit expenditures for supervisors at 20% and counselors at 5% of budget. In small [rural] programs this does not allow the hiring of the full-time committed people needed to do the planning. We need to go out and be visible; we need to build a strong base. To do this we need full-time people [i.e., administrative assistants to director]. We need a division of administrative and programming tasks--with full-time committed people for both. (Co-op director)

> I would like to do more long-range planning. If I knew the long-term funding the co-op would get, I could do it, but the current funding mechanism only allows annual planning

. . . . There are always areas where we can improve how we do things. (Co-op director)

I see myself as a planner. If you're going to grow, you're going to have to plan. This planning from year to year is a thing of the past. We need to plan at least 2 years ahead. TEA is not encouraging (or allowing) this type planning. (Co-op director)

A 3 year time span is the most realistic. We are so well established that we should not have to do this yearly routine thing. We could lock into the biennium time scale. We ought to plan for a 2 year period since we know the state side; then on an annual basis we could just do an annual budget. We have pretty restrictive parameters in what we can do in our planning. (Co-op director)

I do not see the purpose of the annual program application; it's a farce--just a compliance document. I would rather have meaningful individual questions asked about how you're going to run your program. (Co-op director)

Another area of difficulty in planning relates to the complexity of the program. Adult basic education is by its very nature a human enterprise and thus seeks to serve very complex, widely varying needs for each individual. Moreover, educational needs cannot be separated from economic needs any more than academic training can be planned and conducted without reference to vocational and life-coping skills. Consequently, one of the most evident factors noted during the on-site visits was that neither the academic nor the vocational training could proceed without attention to the personal psychological needs of the individual. The fears, the lack of self-confidence had to be alleviated before an individual could be expected to learn. Almost every teacher interviewed spoke of this; many administrators supported the concept. Yet explicit statements of goals or at least the outward appearance of most programs seemed to ignore this central purpose. Such weakness in goal setting appeared to cause some problems in planning.

The following statement is an example of the need for clarity in goal setting if effective planning is to occur.

The purpose of ABE is to promote competence in literacy skills and in life skills, including speaking and writing intelligently. To do this you must also help people develop their self-concepts. (Teacher)

A third aspect of the planning process that appeared to cause difficulty was that of gathering input for planning and of involving in the planning process the many different groups that could ideally be included. Again, the vary nature of the program implied such problems. The typical co-op covers several counties with the instructional program being conducted in numerous sites. The vast majority of the staff members are employed on a part-time basis and have limited insight into the overall program and limited avenues for input into planning. Moreover, the potential number of community groups and agencies that might be involved in serving the undereducated adult is large and complex. Apparently, while realizing that the amount of funding for the coming year would not be any larger than it had been in the past, many directors facing this complexity could see little justification to spend time and money involving all of these potential publics in the planning process.

An organized system for planning is needed. We work closely with the Co-op Coordinating Committee [which contains the superintendents from 12 counties], the college continuing education division, and the local Associate Superintendent for Instruction. (College dean)

You need to get the community involved. The ideal would be to get everyone involved--help students set goals; get the teachers involved in the selection of books. Survey them for in-service needs. Use all the community resources--for example, we will use census data. But our main concern is to increase contact hours in order to increase our funding. Therefore, our heavy emphasis is on recruiting; on trying to inform the public; and in trying to get some more GED courses started. (Co-op director)

I have a weekly plan of activities plus an annual time line with activities on it. I spend time in all areas; for example, I spend 3 days per week in the teaching centers--both day and night. (Co-op director)

The following section of this report more closely examines the program planning process.

This will specifically include the manner in which goals are planned for the co-op and the local program, the methods of obtaining input from advisory boards and other relevant groups, the use of need surveys in the co-ops, and the impact of the State Plan on local planning efforts. First, however, a brief look will be given to what various staff members believe the goals of the program are.

The Goals of Adult Basic Education

The Texas state plan for adult education indicates that the purpose of House Bill 147, an Act of the 63rd Legislature, which dedicated state monies to the ABE program, is "providing for adults to continue their education to the level of completion of secondary school or its equivalency or secure the specific educational prerequisites for gainful employment." To accomplish this the state plan authorizes instructional programs for: (a) "providing adults basic reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics skills, and general knowledge acquisition through the eighth grade level of competency;" (b) preparing adults for successful completion of the GED test; (c) "assisting adults to complete high school credit programs;" (d) "assisting adults to meet specific educational objectives below the college credit level;" and (e) "providing educational prerequisites to vocational training or post-secondary education."

All evidence gathered by the evaluation team indicates these goals are accepted throughout the state and implemented to the degree feasible in local situations. The feasibility of such implementation is generally determined by several factors. First, the availability of sufficient financial resources to implement such programs throughout the co-op. Frequently, such a comprehensive program was in place in the co-op center or in selected learning centers throughout the co-op. Other sites within these localities had limited outreach programs. A second factor limiting the implementation of a total program related to the acceptance by local personnel of such comprehensive training by the ABE program. Examples of this were reluctance by public school officials to accept the idea of a competency-based high school diploma program or the lack of vision among local educators regarding ways of integrating academic and vocational programs for adults. A third and the most obvious issue involved what might be called the prerequisites for reaching such goals. All of the instructional staff and most of the administrators interviewed emphasized that the personal needs of the individual must be acknowledged and dealt with before academic training is feasible. Thus, the prime goal for the instructional staff was usually phrased as "giving the student some self-confidence," "building the self-concepts of students," or "listening to the real needs of the learners."

Listed below are statements from representative personnel throughout the ABE program. They clarify what individuals working within the program see as the immediate goals of their efforts.

> The purpose of ABE is to promote competence in literacy skills and in life skills, including speaking and writing intelligently. To do this you must also help people develop their self-concepts. (Teacher)

> The purpose of ABE is to meet the needs of the students. Almost every student needs help with self-concept. (Teacher)

> The purpose of ABE is to take non-functioning people and make them functional. Before coming many have had no access to news, to ideas, or anything. When they are done, they say: "We have a job and pay taxes, and we don't even get a refund back!" (Aide)

> Illiteracy is a danger to democracy. You have people who are so persuadable because all information belongs to others. That is so important no matter what your political persuasions are; literacy is important to democracy. (Teacher)

> The purpose of the program is to build self-improvement skills. They learn to write a check, and that's a great accomplishment for them. I have many adults who dropped out in early grades and cannot read. (Aide)

> The purpose of ABE is to help adults achieve personal and professional goals and to learn how to learn. (Teacher)

> The purpose of the ABE program in the State Hospital is to help incarcerated individuals improve their skills to survive in the real world. It is a therapy-oriented program. (Teacher)

We're teaching people to become citizens. We're teaching people to get a GED. We're working with minorities--unless we educate, for example, the Hispanic race, the children will not progress. (Supervisor)

Goal Setting at the Local Level

The Adult Basic Education program in the state appears to be much more a response to perceived needs of local clientele than an orderly attack on pre-planned objectives. When administrators were asked in the mailed questionnaire whether their program had a written statement of goals other than those stated in the Annual Program Application, 60.5% said "No." Discussions with administrators and teachers during the on-site visits revealed little evidence of specific goal setting within programs. Most frequently such discussions turned to general purpose statements for ABE such as those listed above or to areas of need that would be given increased priority as soon as sufficient resources were available.

Although specific goal setting seems to be done mainly in connection with the Annual Program Application, there was evidence that some directors were concerned with setting priorities for the allocation of their limited resources. At the local level teachers, especially learning center staffs, and administrators did discuss aspects of the program which should be given emphasis. However, in general program goals appear to be more dependent upon the needs of the enrolling adults learners and the limited funds available than a response to pre-planned objectives.

A typical response regarding goal setting is given below. This comment was made during an on-site interview.

Programs are planned by the budget available. You don't plan for things that could be done because why go out if you can't do anything . . . . You can't look to expansion because you don't know if there will be any money there. (Learning center director)

Input into the Planning Process

Input into the planning process comes from a number of sources. In this section the following will be examined: advisory committee members and other personnel connected with the program, need surveys, and state of Texas documents and personnel. The amount of input and its impact on local programs of each of these sources varied somewhat according to local needs and conditions.

Advisory Groups

State directives call for the establishment of both Co-op Coordinating Committees and local advisory boards. During the statewide evaluation, members of the Texas A&M evaluation team met a number of individuals who served on these boards. On one occasion team members had the opportunity to sit in on a local board meeting. In another community a long-time chair of the advisory group provided the time for an in-depth interview with a team member. It was quite evident to the evaluation team that both types of committees were established and in operation throughout the sites visited. Because of the difference in their purposes and methods of operation, they will be treated separately below.

Co-op Coordinating Committees

Each co-op visited had an operating Co-op Coordinating Committee. The composition of these committees varied in different localities. Co-ops operating through local school districts usually had the superintendents or their representatives from the other school districts within the co-op as the members of the committee. Others included representatives of community colleges, regional service centers, and business or social groups in the area. These committees met three or four times a year and their major business seemed to be that of providing input to and approval of the annual program plan of the co-op.

Given below are descriptions of several such Co-op Coordinating committees as provided by co-op directors.

The Co-op Coordinating Committee is composed of superintendents or their representatives. We meet twice a year for input and program plan approval. Local advisory committees meet every month or two. (Co-op director)

Most members of our Co-op Coordinating Committee are superintendents or assistants, occasionally a community education director. They expect me to come with an initial draft of our annual plan and then they adapt it to the

needs of their communities. (Co-op director)

We have had very good participation on Co-op Coordinating Committee. We shift our meetings around--every other one being out in the co-op somewhere. We meet and take care of our business at times when it's convenient to these busy people; we enjoy one another's company. The superintendents share a lot of non-adult education ideas also at these meetings. (Co-op director)

The Co-op Coordinating Committee is made up of the contact people chosen by the superintendents of the area. We meet four times a year to "discuss" things. (From other comments it was concluded that the major task of the committee was approval of the annual plan.) (Co-op director)

Local Advisory Committees

These committees tended to differ considerably from the co-op committee at least in several of the sites visited. Membership on this committee tended to represent the agencies and organizations most involved in service to the undereducated adult. They met more frequently and their input was often directly connected to program operation. Repeatedly, the evaluation team was told that this group has to represent the clientele to be served by the ABE program as well as the agencies interested in such service. This was to guarantee sufficient input into the program. On a number of occasions, there was also evident another motive in membership selection. Local power bases were tapped to provide members for the committee with the obvious intent of using these sources to strengthen the program.

Comments of local administrators are included below to provide insight into the composition and operation of local advisory committees. It should be born in mind that such committees varied greatly depending on local needs and the local administrator.

We have people from the college, from the local and surrounding school districts, former students, housewives, local council of governments, various businesses, the giant industries in the area, various clubs, ministers--25 in all. We only meet formally about twice a year, but when I need advice I just get on the phone to one or more of them. For example, the lawyer and accountant give a lot of their help and advice. (Learning center director)

The advisory committee helps identify students, it helps set goals, helps in public relations. They work with the literacy council members to secure volunteers, and they "have a real feel for the community." The advisory committee is a joint one for adult education and community education in our area. (Co-op director)

I personally feel like our advisory board was responsible for letting their community groups know about us because they made sure those social services are aware that there is such a program . . . and they give them a contact person. This advisory council is very active in the community. At the end of the year we have a program, a graduation, and the advisory council members come out. They have a good time, and the students really appreciate their interest. (Supervisor)

We are a single district co-op, so there is no advisory board. (Co-op director)

The danger with advisory boards is that they could only be used as a compliance mechanism; they do not have lot of power. Our program has such good administration, the advisory council does not have lots of problems. We don't change membership a lot because the program is so well run. (Advisory board member)

Both advisory board members and directors spoke of the advantages and the problems of working with such groups. The advice from board members generally centered around two points. The membership on the board must be representative of the community to be served. Also, communication channels between the director and the board members are most important. The directors concerns more frequently revolved around the amount of time that had to be invested in keeping a board informed and interested. At times, some complained that such efforts did not prove effective; the board member might be informed and supportive, but the agency represented by that individual in general showed little awareness or interest in adult basic education.

Advice from a few board members and directors is included below. These statements were made to evaluation team members during

on-site visits.

> An advisory council must have members who are not the top administrators in the district; these people don't have daily contact with the program. Rather, they need people who are administrators of programs in the co-op. It would be good to have teachers and paraprofessionals on board. Most important is a cross section of people who are directly related to and impacted by adult education. This would include agencies related to adult education. (Advisory board member)

> Our meetings are always well organized; members are encouraged to question and criticize. We get plenty of opportunity to comment. I like getting relevant documents far enough in advance to prepare for meetings; it is effective two-way communication. (Advisory board member)

> A council must have a cross-section and representation of everyone is the service region; it's got to get representation for all. We need to have minority representation. Since someone else is appointing board members, directors may have to communicate this through a letter to the superintendent doing the appointing. This can avoid lots of problems. (Advisory board member)

> Close communication between board members and the co-op director is the secret of success. The time and effort must be taken to inform and to allow expression. A good representation of the community is needed on the board. (Advisory board member)

> We need to remember that referrals go both ways. A good working relationship with all agencies in town can be developed through an advisory group made up of agencies. But you have to be careful that these activities don't take up too much of your time. Full-time staff develops these relationships in our co-op. (Co-op director)

The opportunity the evaluation team had to sit in on advisory committee meetings and to interview advisory board members in-depth made it quite clear as to what some of the advantages and accomplishments of such boards might be. Certainly the communication and cooperative efforts among agencies serving the undereducated adult population must be ranked high. In addition, the joint efforts of such groups are often more effective than the sum total of their individual efforts could be. For example, a local business man may be able to get the ear of the superintendent when the director of adult education can not. The ABE program may be able to design a program to meet specific needs of the Texas Employment Commission once these are understood. Finally, the spirit engendered by people working together for the good of the community is a benefit less tenuous but not to be ignored.

A description of a board meeting attended and a comment by the chair of another advisory committee are given below. Benefits of advisory committees can be garnered from them.

> The advisory council of the learning center met during our visit so we were invited to attend. Members in attendance were a probation officer, a minister, a local business man, representatives from the school district and the Texas Employment Commission, and the learning center director and the co-op director. One of the primary concerns of this group over the past several meetings had been the relocation of the learning center. For this purpose, the staff of the learning center had population maps prepared showing areas of the city in which attenders lived. Several comments and suggestions for further action were made by board members including market surveys, cost effectiveness studies, and checks of facilities available. One member had made informal contacts with the superintendent, and it was agreed that such contacts should be continued before a formal request was presented by the learning center director for re-location. The group also reviewed the accomplishments of the program and discussed barriers such as the lack of transportation. The probation officer explained to the others the reason his clients needed a special class--to establish a positive self-image and improve job-seeking, money management, and communication skills. Also mentioned was a newly-formed community awareness committee established by the Chamber of Commerce. The point was made that had not two members of the advisory committee also been appointed to that group, the awareness committee would have completely ignored the adult education program. The meeting concluded with general discussion of topics such as the lack of benefits

for ABE teachers and the potential effects of House Bill 246. (Evaluation team member)

A significant accomplishment of our advisory council, in my opinion, was our involvement in evaluation which will serve next year as a needs assessment . . . . What do members get out of it? Lot of fun! Human nature enjoys doing some things that are good. We are able to improve things--a lot of this comes from relationship with other members and the improved personal communication that results. The effort I put in is not as great as what I get out of it. (Advisory board member)

Input of Staff Members

One final comment regarding input into planning must be made. Several directors mentioned the frequent neglect of their own staff members in the advisory process. They felt such involvement of staff would be most useful, but to this point no system had been established to formalize this process. Several teachers suggested similar concerns saying advisory board members and students were consulted more frequently than they were.

One director made the following comment regarding involvement of staff members.

Maybe we should have an advisory committee of staff members. We could use staff development funds to bring them together for input on the program. This would involve them in the planning process. (Co-op director)

This negative feeling about opportunity for input into the overall program of the co-op by the program staff members was not universal. Many teachers and supervisors believed their directors not only listened but also actively sought their suggestions. However, the means established for such input were usually informal and directed more toward program improvement than general goal setting. Many staff members preferred this free, informal approach in communicating their ideas.

In summary, it might be said that while many program staff members felt they had little opportunity for sharing their ideas regarding the program in general, many others said they had all the chance to do so that they wanted. Perhaps the most typical response of teachers to the interviewers' question regarding their input into general program planning was the following: "We are free to manage our own classes, but we have little input into the planning of the whole program."

The following are comments made by instructional staff during the evaluation visits about input into the program planning process. As can be seen, some of these individuals felt quite positive about their opportunity for input while others did not.

She has no input into the program beyond her classroom. (Teacher)

As a learning center teacher, I did have input on program planning beyond my classroom, but as a part-time teacher, I do not. (Teacher)

I can have input into the co-op program anytime I want to. (Learning center director)

I feel comfortable with the co-op director and staff; I can share anything with them. They know what is going on because they visit the classrooms and understand the students. (Aide)

I've been able to see the failures and the problems that we have had in the school district, and I make recommendations. (Teacher)

I don't really have any input into planning beyond the activities of my classroom. But I can give feedback during co-op workshops. (Teacher)

Administrators seem to listen. They let teachers give input at workshops and tell teachers to call the office with suggestions. (Teacher)

We really don't have any input on program planning. Administrators write the rules. (Teacher)

We get together with the co-op director sometimes. He listens to our ideas. Just recently we had a problem with the structure. It was chaotic. He helped us with improving the structure. (Teacher)

I feel I have a great deal of input, and they respond quickly. Last year at the end they asked for an evaluation, what sort of things would be helpful, and at the end of the first semester, they asked for another evaluation. (Teacher)

I always felt like I was a part. The co-op

director could come and ask for my opinion, and I felt like my opinion would be considered. We could disagree entirely, but yet I got asked. (Supervisor)

I have little to do with the overall planning for the co-op which I perceive is done by the co-op director and head teachers. (Aide)

As supervisor I give the co-op director numbers and projections; later the director shows me the program application and his budget. I am on the co-op coordinating committee--so I can provide input here. (Supervisor)

I have no input on program planning beyond the activities of my classroom. (Teacher)

We supervisors do not have a lot of input in goals, but we can provide informal input on the way the program operates. (Supervisor)

Need Surveys

Surveys of needs and interests of potential clientele have long been recognized in adult education as one of the essential ingredients of program planning. The Texas State Plan for Adult Education encourages the use of need assessments stating as a positive criteria of successful programming that " . . . (a) provisions have been made for surveys of local area adult educational needs and (b) program components are based on realistic adult priority needs." On-site visits by the evaluation team found limited use being made of need surveys.

There seem to be two major reasons for the limited use of need surveys by local and regional administrators. One relates to the limited funding base of the adult education program. Many directors openly admitted that they were aware of additional needs and opportunities for programs in their area. However, in their opinion, further investigation of these situations through such means as need surveys would only be frustrating because they had no resources to meet such needs. The time and resources dedicated to discovering additional needs and interests in their area only detracted from the efforts being put into meeting already well-known needs.

Although less acknowledged, a second reason seemed to exist for the limited use of need assessment approaches. Effective assessment of needs is a difficult process and the result of inadequately designed approaches can provide misleading information. Although those interviewed did not speak of this problem directly, they did refer to the difficulty of getting at "the real needs" and of poor response rates they experience in some of their attempted surveys.

The quotations listed below refer both to the lack of resources available to meet newly-discovered needs and the difficulty of doing good need surveys. They are taken directly from on-site interviews with ABE personnel.

It's strange that we make such a big deal of need assessment because there are greater needs there than we are ever going to have the money to take care of. I don't spend a whole lot of time on need assessments. (Co-op director)

I don't think local programs do any kind of needs survey. As co-op director, I encourage planning through suggestions and forms. Only the learning center has a truly active advisory committee. The other sites are just one class of 15 people. If there are enough people interested, we have a class. If not, we don't. (Co-op director)

What makes our center a success is that we listen to the community and respond to what we hear. We do formal need assessments, but we learn more about local needs by talking to people. (Learning center director)

We include some questions about adult education in the community survey done by the district and in other independent surveys. We have an interest in getting feedback from ex-students and do mail surveys twice a year. We also publish a mail-in form in the newspaper We always get poor response from this. The real needs are uncovered by word of mouth and personal contact with people. (Supervisor)

I do a survey of all superintendents and selected businesses and agencies annually. Most superintendents seem to respond but few others do. (Co-op director)

Impact of State Plan on Local Planning

On the mailed Administrator Questionnaire co-op directors were asked the following question: "To what extent does the state plan, including annual program applications, affect planning in your co-op in these areas?" Eight

different aspects of programming were listed and the choices of "greatly, moderately, little, or none" were offer. The percent of directors responding to each choice is listed in Table 1. These data suggest that the directors feel that their program plans reflect greatly to moderately the directives of the state office. However, because no distinction was made in this question between the formal "State Plan" and the regulations and directives disseminated with the annual program applications, these results should be interpreted together with the information gathered through the on-site visits.

Table 1
Percentage of Influence of
State Plan on Local Planning

Area	Great	Mod.	Little	None
Goal setting	57	40	3	0
Outside relations	40	55	3	2
Specific clients	78	16	3	3
Funding	95	5	0	0
Evaluation	32	66	2	0
Staff development	53	47	0	0
Staffing qualifications	34	45	18	3
Recruitment	42	50	5	3

According to the data gathered through on-site interviews there are mixed perceptions in the state regarding the impact of the state plan on local plans. Those who spoke in positive terms regarding its impact generally referred to the regulations, restrictions, and priorities sent out with the annual program application. For them, the amount of funding that would be allocated to their program dictated what they would do. They showed little or no awareness of the formal "State Plan." A few understood the requirement imposed on the state to submit a state plan and to establish broad objectives for the state's programs through it. Some of these individuals felt that they had had input into the development of the plan and that it did impact on what they did locally. Others were much less positive. Some were not concerned about the plan; others expressed interest and a desire to be more involved in its development and implementation. The most common suggestion offered to the evaluators regarding this matter involved greater involvement of the TEA regional representatives. Some directors felt they could be a profitable link between the state office and local programs.

A few comments have been taken from the field interviews of the evaluation team to provide a feeling for this mixed reaction. They are included below.

> The state plan does not affect the local plan at all. (Co-op director)

> I think the state plan reflects our local plan. I'm not sure which is built first, but we have always had input into the state plan. At times TEA has called co-op directors in to brainstorm. I feel I've had input; my ideas were heard. (Co-op director)

> It's [co-op program] just something that's been done over the years whether it's in the state plan or not. From the state, the main thing we are concerned about is the money. (Co-op director)

> A lot more could be done in planning. We never see the state plan. Because little planning is done, a big problem results--no one knows we are here. We are told: "Here's the money you will have, budget accordingly." (Learning center director)

> There is no relationship between local plans and the state plan. The co-op plan comes from the input of the advisory committee. As regional representative, I have no input into co-op plans or into the state plan. The state plan should be shared with the co-op directors at least. If it were shared, it likely would have some effect on co-op plans. Now most local plans are based on what was done in the past. (Historical figure)

> I would like to know what is going on at the state level. I would like to have input into it. All programs need input from the grass roots level, but people at the top level figure we're not interested. (Teacher)

> I have never seen the Annual Plan that is sent to Washington. To me the "State Plan" is the annual program application. I think a help with this would be a strong Area Consultant system and a smaller Austin staff. (Co-op director)

> The state plan is the base because it provides the funding and the structure; it provides the

criteria to follow--the link to rules and regs. However, it's only the base to spring from. It provides broad objectives but does not tell you how to do it. (Co-op director)

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

Staffing

Investigations of staffing patterns and policies during the on-site visits revealed a variety of procedures and concerns. Some co-ops opted strongly for full-time teaching personnel while others relied almost entirely on part-time instructional staff members. In like manner, some programs had a central hiring system while others left selection of staff members to individual programs throughout the co-op. This variation in staffing policies was noted particularly in the area of mid-management positions. Most concerns voiced centered on strategies for the ensuring selection of quality personnel when hiring co-op directors, supervisors, and instructional personnel.

Selection of Co-op Directors

The turn-over rate among co-op directors has been quite slow across the state. Most of those interviewed had at least 10 years of experience in the position. However, the interview team did visit one location during the time that the co-op was selecting a new director and was able to observe the selection process in action.

Directors are hired by the institution acting as the fiscal agent for the area. There are no state regulations or certification requirements for this position in Texas. The co-op coordinating committee of the area may be involved in the process, but in actuality the fiscal agent is quite free to select whomever it wishes. In the co-op in which an actual selection of a new director was observed, it appeared that the opening had been broadly advertised and that considerable input had been sought from concerned personnel within the co-op and others throughout the state. However, the final decision was made by one or a few individuals within the sponsoring institution. In this case, an experienced adult educator was selected. It must have been quite tempting, though, for the institution to direct the selection process toward the general needs of the institution rather than the specific needs of the co-op.

Concern for the manner in which co-op directors are hired was voiced by several of the interviewees. The following statements demonstrate this general concern.

> A director's position can come open, and there are no requirements for it. There is more regulation over an aide in a JPTA program than there is for a co-op director who will handle a multi-county program. (Co-op director)

> Some kind of standards for professional preparation of adult educators in Texas will occur. This should occur first for administrators and then for teachers. (Historical figure)

> We have some administrators coming from our own ranks but not enough. Too many still have not been trained in adult education and know little, if anything, about teaching adults. (Teacher)

Selection of Supervisors and Other Mid-management Personnel

Policies regarding the hiring and assignment of mid-management personnel vary greatly from co-op to co-op and at times even within some co-ops. The full-time personnel, those working out of the central office of the co-op, and most learning center directors are usually hired by the co-op director. Part-time supervisors, on the other hand, are frequently hired by other organizations within the co-op;sometimes this is without any input from the co-op director. Thus, mid-management personnel interviewed varied from competent, professional adult educators to minimally trained, disinterested part-timers.

Among those interviewed, there seemed to be a tendency to ignore the incompetent administrator and to work closely with the competent individual. Some felt that:

> Administrators now better represent the total population. They are younger, some are female, they tend to be full time, and they are more selected on adult education ability than in the past. (Historical figure)

Selection of Instructional Personnel

The two major questions on this topic that were pursued by the interview team were: (a) who hires instructional personnel and (b) what policies are in place to promote quality in the selection and retention of teachers. Questions regarding other aspects of staff management

such as training are treated elsewhere in this report.

Who hires instructional personnel? A variety of policies are in force in the various co-ops of the state regarding responsibility for hiring of teachers. However, the sites visited did tend to show a broad, general tendency in this matter. Instructional personnel are hired by the local administrator;sometimes they may be representative of the local district or college; other times they may be a full-time adult educator. The co-op director may or may not take an active role in the hiring process. Typical hiring practices are described in the quotations below.

> We try to work through the local school system [at least check with the superintendent]. The co-op indicates what kind of people are needed, and the superintendent usually chooses an individual to fit this description. (Co-op director)

> Teachers at the learning center are hired by the center director; in outlying programs, they are hired by the local superintendent. All are paid the same $10 rate. (Secretary)

> Local ISD people hire teachers. It's their program. I survey them each year asking how many classes they will offer, when, and how much money they need. If we get enough state money, then I tell them okay. (Co-op director)

> The co-op director hires all personnel. We supervisors wish we could have some input. We would w[illegible]t more dedicated teachers--someone who is really interested in teaching. (Supervisor)

> A prospective teacher fills out an application. We do the interviewing; we then call the co-op director and send the person over to talk to him [he usually goes with our recommendations]. We also have the dean at the college interview those teaching there. (Supervisor)

> A potential teacher is interviewed by a superviser, and then by the co-op director. We then get together, discuss, and make a joint decision. The supervisor makes the follow-up contact with the person. All volunteers go through the Literacy Council. (Co-op director)

> Agencies with flow through dollars select their own teachers; I hire most teachers for the co-op. I set up an appointment, put them through a screening process, and sees to their training. I hire all full-time people; the supervisors recommend part-timers [I go with them 90% of the time]. (Co-op director)

Quality in Teaching

Several concerns were voiced by those interviewed about the policies for promoting quality in teaching. Dominant among these was the need to select teachers with personality traits that enabled them to relate well to the students. Competence in subject matter was definitely rated second in comparison to such personal characteristics. Concern for the high turnover rate among teachers in some areas and questions regarding certification in adult education for instructors occasionally were raised when discussing policies promoting quality in instructional personnel. Remarks such as the following were common.

> Primarily I look for personal skills; secondly I look for content area skills. I have them take an application home and complete it accurately. I check references and have developed a form for recording results of this reference check. (Co-op director)

> I have difficulty in knowing what to look for when choosing teachers. At times there will be someone who just completely fools you. They look good on paper; they look good in an interview. But when you really start seeing what goes on in the classroom, you're shocked. So I can't really say that if you have a good educational background, you'll make a good teacher because your personality has a lot to do with it. (Supervisor)

> The question of should a teacher be certified . . . in ESL . . . in GED--I think that personality and if that person is willing to be flexible to learn new methods, to try new things, . . . those are the ingredients you need to look for. (Supervisor)

> I look for people with some practical experience in developmental reading and with good skills in interpersonal relations--people who can provide supportive response in their relationships with students. This is hard to measure objectively, but you observe it quickly. Usually it's reflected by class attendance. (Supervisor)

There is a big turnover in ABE teachers. (Supervisor)

I don't say I fire them [teachers], I just don't rehire them. (Supervisor)

Teacher Benefits

The rate of pay, the absence of any fringe benefits, the lack of any reimbursement for travel, and the absence of full-time employment and career advancement for most teachers was a recurring concern voiced by many of the interviewees. Teachers' comments on this have already been noted when dealing with the dedicated nature of most teachers (see above), but administrators also spoke of their struggles with such issues for some saw such deficiencies as blocks to the retention of quality teachers.

We have no travel or any other benefits. Part-time people are paid $8.00 per hour. It's getting hard to get qualified people for such low pay. (Supervisor)

Our pay for teachers is low--$9.50 an hour. (Co-op director)

We pay $9.00 the first year, $9.50 the second, and $10.00 after that. If they work more than half time, they are eligible for teacher retirement; if more than 30 hours, for district insurance. (Co-op director)

Part-timers begin at $7.00 an hour; those with 1 to 5 years experience get $8.00 and those over 5 years, $9.00. The full-time staff is on state minimum pay scale. They have 10, 11, or 12 month contracts and get all the fringe benefits of the service center. (Co-op director)

Evaluation

Little evidence was found during the on-site visits of any comprehensive evaluation systems in place. A number of factors seemed to impede efforts of administrators to develop such systems. The part-time employment status of most teachers and the geographically scattered location of programs were certainly major factors. The limited number of trained supervisors added to the difficulty. In most locations, supervisors apparently were in charge of evaluation of the instructional program. For the most part their approach to teacher and program evaluation appeared quite informal. Some were quite knowledgeable of what was going on in the classrooms and had established helpful relations with most teachers. However, when they were questioned about evaluation procedures, most spoke in vague terms of general observation or of their reliance on attendance records to judge the health of the program.

Several co-ops did have comprehensive, formal programs of evaluation in place. For example, one director spoke of how he visits programs throughout the co-op on a regular basis; sometimes his visits are for formal evaluation, and at other times they are just so he can be available. He formally evaluates all full-time staff annually. Experienced teachers are observed once a year; new staff are observed twice a year. A formal instrument is used to gather data, and each observation is followed by a discussion with the teacher. Teachers are allowed to file a written response to each evaluation visit. In this co-op, part-time teachers are evaluated by part-time supervisors. This co-op director did not appear as happy with this part of the evaluation system especially in view of the fact that some classes only met for a short time and did not get evaluated.

The director of a small co-op also spoke of what appeared to be a comprehensive evaluation system. He evaluated the teachers annually with special attention being paid to the goals and objectives for that year. The advisory committee did a general evaluation of the programs, and the sole, full-time teacher in the co-op kept all informed of enrollment, achievement, and other relevant statistics.

Several quotations were quite insightful regarding the status of evaluation and are offered below.

I tried to set up an evaluation system, but it did not work. I would really like some help in setting up a good system. I want to use the supervisors to meet with the teachers once a month to go over the goals and objectives of the program. To do this I need to get the teachers to buy into the program, but we need such constant communication and feedback between teachers and supervisors. Also, we want to use input from the students to evaluate the teachers. The situation must be open. But we need a full-time, competent administrator to be able to do this. (Co-op director)

I have a very loose approach to evaluation. I think I know the teachers well; I look at the drop out rate; and I give feedback very informally. (Supervisor)

The co-op director surveys the students to find out what they think of the program, but he doesn't survey us. We would like input too! (Teacher)

This last quotation is especially significant because a number of co-op directors indicated that they were aware that they did not make adequate use of their instructional staffs in planning and evaluating. Numerous teachers also indicated a desire for more formal involvement in such processes.

Students and teachers were quite vocal in their evaluation of the program. The evaluation team constantly heard comments such as the following.

I think this program is a real good idea! It furthers your education. (Student)

It does work. I don't do things that I did before. I'm glad I'm here. (Student)

The program should continue because it helps the many students who drop out of school. It is also good for those who want to get a better job. Our program helps those who can't read, and it does not make students feel like they have to compete. Each student is treated like an individual. (Teacher)

There should be adult education centers in every location because a lot of adults are now ready to do something for themselves. The center here is terrific! It should be open 24 hours a day. (Student)

The program is great. It gives students a second chance. (Aide)

I think they should continue this program so we would have a better city. The city would grow more. If the people learned English and mathematics, we would have more businesses. (Student)

I see ABE as being a very productive part of society. (Supervisor)

I don't know how you'd improve it any because it's a real good program just like it is. (Student)

I think it is one of the best things that ever happened to me in my whole life. Emotionally, it did a whole lot for me, and I've seen it do that for others too. (Aide)

There is no problem with their being held accountable. The program is successful. Our program is giving lots of people a second chance. Education is a lifelong process. My only wish is that we could have the program open all hours. Adult education has a purpose. A little maturity sometimes helps in leaning . . . . It's not a welfare program--the main thing about these people is their lack of dignity; they want a hand, not a hand out. Adult education does that. It lets people control their own future. (Superintendent)

The Organization of the System

The Co-op System

There was universal acceptance and praise of the co-op system throughout the state and at every level of person interviewed. This included superintendents, college presidents, deans, and service center directors; co-op directors and mid-management personnel; teachers and aides; and advisory board member and other interested personnel. The most common reason given for such satisfaction was the effective use of available money. Others described how it freed them from administrative concerns and allowed them to concentrate on instruction. Several described how the system enabled the adult education program to reach out into the smaller surrounding communities which would never have been able to muster the resources to develop their own program.

This general acceptance of the co-op system is demonstrated by the statements given below. Especially noteworthy is the variety of positions represented in this support.

You get a hearty yes from me on effectiveness of the co-op system. For one thing it gets more of the dollar to the student because you spend less on administration. It gives flexibility in use of money and maximum use of resources. (Co-op director)

The co-op system is very good for adult basic

education. Odessa could take care of itself, but Praesidio can not. (College president)

This was one of the strongest effects of state funding and has been a very effective system. (Historical figure)

It is definitely a viable system based on its cost effectiveness to the taxpayer. It would cost the state a fortune to replace this system with one as effective. (Dean of continuing education)

It is definitely an effective, a necessary system. Even Victoria would have a struggle maintaining a program without the support of the system. (Co-op director)

I think it is great. Where you have less administration funneled into any project, you have more money for the classroom. And that's the name of the game--the classroom. (Historical figure)

It is working like a dream. Except for actually handling the money from TEA, we set up our own program and have satellite centers just like many co-ops. (Learning center director)

The system works well; it cuts down on bureaucracy; publishers have worked closely with directors to set up learning centers and to make them aware of materials. (Publisher)

The co-op system is good. We want them to continue to take care of the paper work for us so we can spend our time helping adults learn. (Aide)

Now that we have formed our own co-op, things are working well. Before, we had no control of planning, indirect costs, books, or input into in-service. This may have been unique for a co-op takes on the style of the director . . . . The main problem for small districts in the co-op are no control over budget and duplication. (Co-op director)

Sponsoring Agencies

Although there was general praise and acceptance of the co-op system, the interviewing team did encounter a lively disagreement on what was the best fiscal agent or sponsoring organization for an ABE cooperative. Those promoting the community college pointed to their situation as one natural for adult learners and one that offered many other services for adults such as vocational training for adults. Supporters of the school district spoke of greater involvement in the community and awareness of peoples' needs. In the opinion of others, the regional service center had distinct advantages in impartiality and administrative ease.

The sponsoring agency has a vital impact on the adult education program of the area. It has sole charge of the selection and retention of the co-op director. It makes important decisions regarding indirect costs, reporting procedures, and general policies for the co-op. The following reflect the divergent views concerning the best type of sponsoring agency.

The community college site is a natural because: (a) it's a prestigious place to go; (b) it gets them away from the school environment in which they failed; (c) it's easy to go on to another educational program or further training. (Co-op director)

I would rather see the program located in the public school than in the college because I think the school people would see the needs of the students more clearly. (Teacher)

The [community] college is a great setting for an ABE co-op. Students feel good saying: "I'm going over to the college for a class." Besides, it's not one ISD contracting with other ISDs. (College president)

A community college is a perfect setting for adult basic education. It is possible for a back and forth flow among ABE, JPTA, the Testing Center, and the Developmental Program. Adults feel comfortable in "college." Scholarships are available for ABE students to motivate them to go on. (Dean of continuing education)

School districts have insight into the needs of the local program. Service centers are not set up to administer but to serve programs. They can have a very real role in adult and community education, but it is not to administer. (Historical figure)

This co-op is now administered out of the regional service center. We have felt much freer to operate since we have become part of the

Center. (Supervisor) Lots of people who have not finished school like going to the college environment. It's prestigious to go to college, and 40 to 60% take at least one course after they finish their GEDs. It's about 50/50 for those going on in vocational or academic training. For 2 years in a row, the highest graduating student at the community college came through our GED program; about 50-60% do well in their first year. (Supervisor)

The community college is the best setting because ABE can easily be coordinated with the vocational program. The Service Centers have no authority; thus, no power to press for change. The ISDs are strong on delivery of programs. (Historical figure)

Delivery of Services

The co-ops which were visited differed significantly in their structure and manner of delivering services throughout their geographical area. Several were organized around a central learning center which was used as a major resource for programs in other parts of the co-op. In most such arrangements, the outlying programs were quite independent and relied upon the central administration of the co-op mainly for fiscal and staff development matters. The degree of guidance provided to these outlying programs often depended on the selection of and the tasks given to the co-op's supervisory staff. Part-time supervisors were usually employees of the outlying school district or college and a few were not even paid out of co-op funds. These individuals acted more as local contact people, and only special efforts by the co-op director welded them into any type of unified force. Full-time supervisors, on the other hand, tended to be much stronger in promoting a unified program throughout the broad reaches of the co-op.

Other co-ops were organized around a series of centers. In some areas, each learning center not only acted quite independently but also was responsible for all programming in surrounding areas. In a sense, they formed mini-cooperatives within the co-op. Other co-ops organized the major portion of their programs around learning centers but maintained much stronger control by the central administration.

A few areas appeared to be organized around classes. These co-ops tended to use part-time teachers and supervisors to spread the program through the district or districts. The amount and kind of services provided by the central administration of these co-ops varied greatly.

Several descriptions of co-op systems are offered below to demonstrate the diversity in practice. It should be noted that co-ops vary greatly in size throughout Texas. Those visited included large metropolitan, multi-district units; isolated small, single district co-ops; and multi-county, geographically dispersed conglomerates.

The learning center are each to be a center with "circuit" teachers going out into the surrounding area. Each center operates independently except for fiscal affairs. In this way we now have in place a system that serves 65 school districts and 5 community college districts. (Co-op director)

We have a strong learning center here in town; it is a "mini-center" that is open 8 hours a week plus at special times for classes [located in another community]. We also have classes in about nine other schools scattered throughout the co-op. (Co-op director)

We have a small program. There needs to be clerical help in order that the one teacher can follow-up on students and not have to spend her time answering the phone and filing. (Administrator)

The largest part of our program by far is here in the learning center at our co-op site. In addition, we have a few outreach centers here in the city and ABE programs are being held in 8 of the 19 possible surrounding ISDs. That's 12 teachers and 4 aides up to 150 miles away. The out of city sites hold or cancel programs according to their perception of local needs. (Co-op secretary)

In most of the larger towns of our 10 county region, there is at least one ABE/GED class held in the evenings--in some places more. The co-op site and one other city have learning centers. We have had two second level administrators who divided the co-op up to work more closely with programs . . . . The co-op has been working in a consulting capacity with various other agencies--we provide all materials, advice, training and the other organization provides either a paid or volunteer teacher and the

facility. (Supervisor)

Local Delivery Systems

Local delivery systems are organized around either the learning center concept or the self-contained classroom. This division refers only to the method of organizing, however, because many learning centers use a traditional class approach and many adult classrooms are quite individualized. Perhaps the most important distinction between the two is that learning centers tend to be staffed by more full-time personnel. They are also open 8 to 10 hours a day and at least several days a week. Most centers also have more materials and equipment available to them although some class locations are very well supplied.

Adult learning centers. One of the learning centers visited by the evaluation team used a well organized, classroom approach to instruction. Six levels of instruction from beginning ESL through GED were offered both during the day and again at night. The system was so structured that all classes treated the same topics at the same time of the day, thus enabling the student that was more advanced in one subject to "move up" a level or two while that topic was taught. Several other learning centers visited were completely individualized. Students are able to spend as much time in the center as they wish, to move forward at their own pace, and to leave the program when they have reached their goals. Instructors work with students on a one-to-one basis spending most of their time explaining things or introducing learners to appropriate materials.

Several descriptions of learning center operations were provided by the personnel working there. The following are examples.

> Ours is a completely individualized learning center. All of our staff know all of the materials and can work with any of the students. We also run satellite programs in ESL in two centers taught by part-time people. Our regular staff also teach in two nutrition sites, at four homes for the aging on a weekly basis, and in one home on a monthly basis. (Learning center director)

> I have about 60 students a day in my classes. The morning people come 5 days, and the evening people 4 days, for 2 hours at a time. We now have four levels of classes. There is diagnostic testing for each student that enters the learning center. At the end of the semester, they check the progress reports to see which students need to move to next level. (Teacher)

> At our learning center there are four full-time teachers, one part-time teacher, one full-time aide and four part-time aides. We have also developed a literacy council here and members of the community volunteer to tutor on a one-to-one basis 3 to 5 hours a week . . . . The learning center has self-paced, individualized instruction. The most requested subject is math, then English grammar. Some of the teachers also go out to on-site classes. (Supervisor)

> This is a totally individualized learning center. Students come in on a continuous basis. The center is located on the campus of the college and is open 8 am to 9 pm Monday through Thursday and 8 to 12 on Friday. Most work is self-paced and done individually. Teachers select resources for students to use based on perceived student needs. (Aide)

Local classes. There is also a great deal of variety in the way in which local classes are conducted. They are taught in almost every imaginable type of facility, as are described below. Some are directed to special groups of clientele, but most are open to all comers. The general impression derived through the interview visits was that an outreach class, which was held in a facility with which the target group identified, was much more likely to attract minority group members and those with lower educational levels than a learning center.

A few quotes are offered below to allow teachers to give their own impressions of adult education classes.

> We teach evenings and Saturday mornings. We work with the students' employers [e.g., HEB, Maritine Council, local Auto Shops] to get them off during class hours. This is a great type of community development. (Teacher)

> In this program I help parolees. I help students complete forms and applications, and I teach everything--especially a lot of work in math. (Teacher) I operate a reading laboratory. I work with special reading problems and have about 50 adults in my lab each month. (Teacher)

> This is an evening program. There are nine

part-time teachers; most of them teach in the public school system full-time. When I first started in ABE (in the 1950's), I thought the program would have worked itself out by now. But it's getting bigger; more people are getting aware of it. (Supervisor)

Teachers out in the field are mostly part-time while those at the learning center are mostly full-time. Teaching sites are mostly in public schools along with MHMR centers, Lighthouse for the Blind, and churches. (Supervisor)

In starting classes with business and industry, we found students are more likely to stay for class than they are to go home and come back for a class . . . . We have a program in a hospital for students who are going through LVN training because many of them are poor readers and have poor study skills . . . . Churches are especially cooperative in this area. Someone will come and open the building and stay around to lock up, or some even give the teacher the key. (Supervisor)

The co-op provides all the materials, the teacher, and support. The ISD provides the facility. It has been a cooperative effort that has worked well in my opinion. (Supervisor)

Provision of Materials

In a cooperative system which links together teaching sites throughout a large metropolitan area or across dozens of counties, the delivery of materials could be serious problem. The on-site visits and interviews indicated that most co-ops had solved the geographical distribution but were likely to experience some dissatisfaction among teachers due to administrative policies regarding materials or budget restrictions on materials and equipment.

Geographical distribution is handled through the learning centers, the traveling supervisors, or special systems such as the film trucks of the regional service centers. Part-time teachers (paid only for the time spent in the classroom) did occasionally complain about the need to travel across the city to pick up books. At least one of the centers felt they had solved the materials problem locally by making the books available in the college bookstore and having students purchase them.

Administrative policies that caused negative reactions from teachers or students were those that were interpreted as restricting access to necessary materials. Co-ops which involved teachers or teacher committees in the selection of standard materials or allowed teachers to choose among two or three series had the most satisfied teachers. In such co-ops, teachers were also more likely to appreciate the restrictions that the limited ABE budgets placed on instructional materials.

The following comments by teachers, administrators, and students reflect feelings related to the distribution and use of materials within co-op systems.

It is about 30 miles distant, but I have no trouble getting materials from the learning center. [However, she seems to have had difficulty at first though.] The learning center staff also help me plan activities. (Aide)

We have settled on three series and made them available through the college bookstore. There is also a classroom set available for those who do not buy theirs. It allows those who want to take books home to buy theirs and stretch our limited budget. (Co-op director)

There are the needed materials out there [for example, job getting skills] but they [co-op director] say that's not related to GED so we can't have them. We also need visuals and other types of materials but can't get them from the Service Center. (Teacher)

There isn't anything we should do but support the teachers in every way we can. They are putting in their time to teach. We should do all we can to make their time effective. (Co-op director)

Funding has been so limited that materials beyond the student level are sparse. The school district does buy things out of the general fund for adult education at times. (Co-op director)

We could use more equipment, such as an electric typewriter, an adding machine, and a computer. (Teacher)

Administrators select books. This is both good and bad. The program is very material-oriented. The teachers work along with that orientation. (Teacher)

We need to have continued support and new

and good materials. I would like to explore different materials. If we have to create our own materials, it limits the time available to work with students. (Teacher)

It would help to have a duplicating machine. We can go to the region service center to duplicate but that takes too much time and pre-planning. (Teacher)

The program provides all materials but does not allow students to take the books home. We have no way for students to buy their own books. (Supervisor)

Students are allowed to pay a deposit on materials and take them home. (Student)

Supervisors and teachers make recommendations. Our co-op director will buy any thing you want; he encourages people to try new things. (Supervisor)

There is lots of material that would be nice to have, but we can't get it because of budget restrictions. (Teacher)

We have everything we need, but it would be better if we could take the books out so we could study at home. It should be like the library; then we could use our week-ends. (Student)

Since publishers and their representatives play an important role in the delivery of instructional materials, their thoughts on this matter were also sought. They said that the level of funding within a state was critical in determining the relevance and availability of materials locally. Texas is the third or fourth largest market for adult education materials so their thrust in ABE, ESL, or CBAE does influence material made available by publishers. The large amounts of money now available through JPTA is also influencing materials produced; there will be more job orientation and perhaps more low reading level materials in technical areas. Some of the problems publishers have in dealing with ABE in Texas involve the lack of hardware in many adult education centers. Publishers are reluctant to put money into the development of software that may not be used because relevant equipment is not there. The absence of certification for teachers limits the market for those materials. National priorities seem to indicate ESL will remain a priority, the "drive for excellence" will push more youth out of school, and business and industries involvement in literacy may provide new markets. These factors will definitely influence the direction publishers take.

Teaching Facilities

The facilities visited varied from excellent to extremely poor. In general, they were a little older, a bit more crowded, and less equiped than the average classroom in the area. Since many of the facilities were provided by the cooperating agency, the adult education co-op often had limited control over meeting places. Here again there were distinct differences between learning centers and outreach classrooms.

Learning centers had their special needs because of the extended time that they were open and the diversity of audience most of them served. Several learning center directors were desperately trying to find a new location. In fact, when the evaluation team sat in on an advisory board meeting in one community, a major topic of concern was a strategy for getting the local ISD to relocate the adult learning center. The building was a former school. Although it was physically adequate, the neighborhood was one in which few people in the community felt comfortable, and there was almost no parking available.

To demonstrate the diversity in learning center facilities, several descriptions are included below.

We have an excellent facility for our learning center. The building is a former store in the downtown area that was donated to us. We had to incorporate as the Lufkin Adult Learning Center, Inc. to accept the place. There is a total of 17,000 square feet; we use the first and second floors for a learning center and the third floor for storage. The United Way pays the insurance; various foundations have given grants for furnishings and materials; and the co-op pays most of the utilities plus salaries and materials. We also hold some tuition classes to help support the total program. (Learning center director)

The building is terrible. They have no air conditioning. It is bad in the summer, and students

stop coming when it gets hot. We cannot open the windows because of the burglar bars, and there is no insulation in the building. In good weather we are very overcrowded. (Teacher)

The learning center does have a lot more students than the classrooms. But we do have an image problem. I have to work on convincing students that our location is safe. And other teachers too--so that they will come in and see how the materials work that they might use in their own classrooms. (Administrator)

The classes outside of the learning center are held in an almost unbelievable number and variety of locations. Some of those mentioned by teachers or administrators interviewed include: a state school, a rehabilitation center, the city council chambers, the community center, a state hospital, a half-way house, a church, a library, the Salvation Army building, an air force base, a local bank, a prison, and many different types of schools. Many of them were described as excellent or at least as adequate locations for class. However, a significant number were considered unsafe or unsuitable. The most heard criticisms of sites were: unsafe at night, no parking available, no blackboards or equipment, uncomfortable tables and chairs, noisy, or not spacious enough.

These outreach class locations also had one very special need--at least in the minds of a number of directors and teachers. They had to be attractive to minority groups--to those most in need. The following quotations may provide some insight into this special need.

Some students will go anywhere; others will not leave their own communities or neighborhoods. For example, our Hispanic students here won't go to a nearby skills center, but they will come to their church for ESL classes. (Supervisor)

We have people in outreach sites who would never come to the learning center. They don't seem to care what problems there are with the facility. After a while, some might come into a center program but not at first. (Co-op director)

Off-campus sites miss: (a) individualization possibilities; (b) various teaching approaches based on equipment or audio visual materials; (c) supportive services such as counseling and referral. (Teacher)

The majority of the co-op directors give most of their attention to the learning centers. The outlying programs are only strong when they have very good supervisors. They need to use the resources and training available at the learning centers more fully. (Historical figure)

To provide some insight into the special conditions that exist in the ABE classrooms of the state some selected statements from interviews are included below. This is by no means exhaustive of the comments made by teachers and administrators regarding the special needs of adult education.

There is a big range from very good to not having decent tables or chairs. Every facility should have baby sitting; it is a shame to have an illiterate American stay home because of kids. Our ladies pay a dollar a week for a day care cooperative but not all places have the room for such services. (Teacher)

Our facility in the rehab center is spacious, well-lighted, and has comfortable chairs and tables. Our space for materials is limited, but is adequate. There is plenty of parking, adequate snack/break space, and room for other things. (Teacher)

I teach in the city council chamber. It is spacious and students like the large, easy chairs and tables, but I cannot put up charts or chalkboards. I believe students would quit if I move. (Teacher)

I teach in the state hospital. The rooms are very conducive for learning except everything is kept locked. (Teacher)

The learning center is conducive for adult learning except being on a second story with no elevator. The rooms are big and well-lighted with plenty of materials storage available. (Student)

Our class is at the half-way house [a part of a church complex]. The class is held in a large room which is surrounded by the bedrooms of the students. [Here the students are hardcore, tough, and suspicious.] (Student)

They need better facilities, better classrooms. There are too many interruptions; it needs to be quieter. They need to have a private room, not

one that everyone has to go through to get to their bedroom. (Teacher)

The room is a nice one but it is very crowded. We need more space. We could also benefit from an ABE sponsored childcare program, especially for infants. (Teacher)

The classrooms are ideal. The building has a home atmosphere with a kitchen and an open space for the students to use their break time as they want to. This helps them relax. (Teacher)

The superintendent backs us up with good facilities, computers, childcare and support. It would be nice to have my own facilities so I wouldn't have to share the room with the daytime teachers; I can't store anything. (Teacher)

I have planned carefully the facilities for adult students, giving them access to the teacher's lounge for either classes or breaks. The rooms used are very near the entrance so there is easy access. (Supervisor)

In prisons the pressure changes things; in the classroom, there is no pressure. If they had more schools than fields, things would be better [i.e., if prisons stressed education rather than physical labor, they would accomplish more.] (Student)

To be good, a facility needs plenty of room, and the sound should not carry. Let people spread out. It should have adequate ventilation for smoking; convenient; built for adults so you don't feel like someone has put dunce cap on you; have tables instead of desks; soft drinks available. It needs to be disassociated from "school" because for so many, school means failure. (Teacher)

Concerning facilities, however, there was one over riding factor that was evident. Adult education is a human enterprise and the interpersonal relationship within the learning environment are much more important than physical conditions. The physical plant did vary from excellent through adequate to abominable. Some locations had whole buildings dedicated to ABE while others crowded the whole program into one small room. The environment in some areas promoted learning while in others it was, to say the least, a distraction. But the most frequent response to the question: "Is this a good place to learn?" was "Yes, because it is a friendly place to be!" It was the rapport between the teachers and learners, the atmosphere established by the administrator, and the motivation of the adult learners that made these locations good places to learn.

To emphasize this point, a number of comments from the interviews are given below. Many others could be added to this list.

It is comfortable because the teachers are kind. We laugh; all the students are friendly. (Student)

I am comfortable because I like to learn. The teachers are kind. The students are friendly. (Student)

The teacher puts her arms around Viola. That gives me the feeling that she cares. (Student)

This place is comfortable because it is more relaxed than school. (Student)

I like the family atmosphere of the facility and of the program. Everyone knows everybody. This makes me feel like I can come any time. (Student)

I like the comfortable atmosphere. The teacher is the friend of the students. I like to come to class. Everyone knows everyone. (Student)

I was surprised that I was comfortable at the center. I feel like I fit right in. I feel relaxed. (Student)

I am comfortable in the facilities. I am learning and not goofing off. The teacher makes me comfortable. (Student)

I am comfortable in the program because the teacher knows how to communicate. She knows how to get along with everyone. (Student)

I am very comfortable because the students and teachers are all nice to me. (Student)

I am very comfortable because the students are nice and the teacher teaches slowly and speaks slowly. (Student)

I am very comfortable in this program because I feel like I am at home. (Student)

I am comfortable because of the teacher and the place. (Student)

I am comfortable because I am learning and because the teachers are very good and the students are nice. (Student)

I like the learning center because of the environment. Everybody is eager to learn, and we expect to learn more each day. We have three wonderful teachers. (Student)

I am happy in this program. It is close to my house, and they have the books that I need. The teachers explain things. I know that every day the teacher will be friendly. (Student)

I am comfortable in this program because the teachers treat everyone nice and help me when I need help. (Student)

Survey of Community Agencies

The annual plan for adult education includes as program criteria the "effective coordination and cooperation with those other community level units of government and private and public service groups concerned with meeting individual adult needs and area economic needs." In order to assess the extent of this coordination and to obtain an assessment from the cooperating agencies of the quality of this coordination, a variety of community agencies with which local adult education programs could be expected to cooperate were surveyed. A six-item, stamped, self-addressed survey form and cover letter were sent to a random sample of Texas Employment Commission (TEC) offices, public school superintendents, sheriffs, libraries, chambers of commerce, former CETA sponsors, and former CETA agents.

Mail surveys offer the potential of gathering data efficiently from a diverse and widely dispersed sample. However, they suffer from the danger of a low return rate. Table 2 indicates that the overall response rate from the community agencies in this survey was 47% with a range from 22.4% to 59.3%.

Table 2
Precent of Returns
from Community Agencies

Agency	Sample	Returns	%
Superintendents	285	169	59
Employment Commission	184	99	54
CETA Agents	68	34	50
Libraries	226	101	45
Chambers of Commerce	217	96	44
CETA Sponsors	23	10	44
Sheriffs	152	34	22
TOTAL	1155	543	47

The six-item questionnaire elicited information about the existence of an adult education program in the community, about contacts with the program, about the quality of the program, and about suggestions for better serving adults in the area. Of the 538 responding to the item, 68.1% indicated that adult education courses are presently being offered in their community. Some of the 26.7% who responded that classes were not being offered said that classes either were being planned or were offered in the past but were discontinued because of low enrollments. Only 4.2% did not know whether classes were being offered. Surprisingly, nearly one-half of these were libraries. This finding indicates an exceptionally high awareness of the concept of adult education among the kinds of agencies with which local programs can be expected to cooperate. Even in the nearly one-third of the communities that lacked a program, most recognized the program title.

A breakdown of the data from this item suggests that adult education programs may exist in more than 68% of the communities from which returns were received. Of the seven groups surveyed, local programs tend to have more frequent contacts with the employment agencies and CETA programs. From these groups, 94.8% of the Texas Employment Commission responses, 93.9% of the former CETA agents, and 90.0% of the CETA sponsors indicated that adult education programs existed in their areas. While this does not mitigate the need to continue to improve communications with other agencies, it does indicate an extremely high awareness by agencies concerned with providing vocational training and employment services to adult education students.

Although many in the adult education community see the agencies surveyed in this study as logical community agencies with which to cooperate, divergence exists within this group concerning their role in serving under-educated adults. Overall, 72.5% of those responding to the item felt that they had a responsibility to provide services to undereducated adults. A breakdown of the responses indicated that the agencies can be identified as those which feel strongly that their agencies should serve undereducated adults and those which are only mildly committed to serving these adults. Those directly concerned with promoting either basic or vocational skills viewed serving undereducated adults as part of their agency's mission. This group included 89.7% of the TEC offices, 88.9% of the CETA sponsors, 80.7% of the libraries, and 78.1% of the CETA agents. However, even though the public schools are charged with teaching both

academic and vocational skills, only 68.8% of the superintendents felt that their client group included undereducated adults. Despite the constantly low educational level for convicted criminals, only 60% of the sheriffs viewed themselves in a service providing role for the undereducated. Although most chambers of commerce promote education as a community resource, nearly one-half (48.8%) of those responding felt that their chamber should not be involved in providing services to this group. Thus, it appears that as adult educators seek to coordinate with other community agencies, they can expect to find two groups. One group feels that it has an obligation to serve the same target population as those involved in adult education. The other group does not voice a burning commitment to serve this client group even though the upgrading of the educational level of this target group would help the agency further its stated mission.

The difference between philosophical commitment to a client group and cooperation is reflected in the number of interactions between the local adult education programs and the various community agencies. When asked if they had interacted with the local ABE program in the past year, 92.7% of the CETA related agencies indicated that they had. At a more moderate level, 60.1% of the superintendents and 57.1% of the TEC offices had interactions. Very few interactions existed with the group which included the libraries at 33.7%, the sheriffs at 33.3%, and the chambers of commerce at 29.5%. Overall, only 50.4% of these agencies had either initiated or responded to contacts from the local ABE program.

The cooperation pattern is less extensive when the number of referrals over the past year are taken into consideration. The figures indicate a feast or famine syndrome; 49% of the agencies made absolutely no referrals to the adult basic education program while 30.2% made over 15 referrals during the year. Only a few (12.5%) made between 1 - 5 referrals while hardly any (6.6%) made 6 - 10 referrals, and almost none (1.8%) made 11 - 15 referrals. Extensive referrals were made by 85.7% of the CETA sponsors and 63% of the CETA agents. In addition over one-half (51.1%) of the TEC offices had high referral rates. The referral pattern is, thus, one of extremes. Either hardly any referrals are made by a local agency, or a large number of clients are referred to the education program by the local agency also serving the undereducated adult. Once again, those entrusted with vocational missions are the most active in informing their clients about adult education services.

Despite the varying degrees of interaction with the local programs, all of the community agencies give the adult education program in their community high marks. On a five-point grading scale, 29% were rated as excellent, and 42.8% were rated as good. A total of 92.4% of them were grades of average or above. These high marks were distributed throughout all the agencies. The CETA sponsors were the most favorable with all ratings as either good or excellent. The most critical judgments came from 9.5% of the sheriffs and 7.8% of the chambers of commerces that felt the local programs were poor. These high grades suggest that the community agencies have a favorable opinion of the local adult education program regardless of the number of actual contacts that are made.

The survey instrument provided an open-ended question to allow each of the community agencies to suggest ways that the adult basic education program could better serve the needs that exist in the local community. Over one-half of the respondents commented. While the type of comments were widely distributed and no type of response can be associated with any single type of agency, the comments can be grouped into three categories with a large number of responses and six categories with a smaller number of responses. The largest category of responses requested more variety in the types of classes. One TEC representative summed it up by requesting "more classes in a broader range of subjects." Many TEC representatives and public school superintendents suggested vocational courses. These included computer courses, courses related to job readiness, and courses related to skill building in areas such as typing, bookkeeping, welding, and business management. The demography of Texas was reflected in numerous requests for English as a second language courses. However, the responses indicated that Hispanics are not the only minority group in need of English skills. Included were requests indicating that "more classes are needed, particularly for the Southeast Asians." In a third curricular area, many suggested that the program "concentrate on literacy and areas we know." In this basic skills area, reading was mentioned more often

than math.

To many of the respondents, variety meant more than curriculum offerings. These reflected the opinion that "needs could be better met by offering classes in more areas of the district for the convenience of the students" and that "these services need to be offered in more neighborhoods." Others suggested that the classes be "provide[d] on a year round basis" and that "both day and night classes [be] available." Others recommended a greater outreach function by "establishing more classes having *itinerant sites."* Others expressed a need for having "more flexible testing services where students won't be pressured into taking all 5 tests at once unless they want to," having a testing service that would be open more hours and on more days, and "having the Testing Service mail back results to the teacher, who otherwise doesn't always find out how the students have done." Others recognized the need for the supportive services of child care and transportation. Finally, several felt that the variety of course offerings could be expanded by improving the physical facilities in which the programs are held.

In the second largest category, most of the responses used simple and clear language which said "let the people know about it!" While many just stated "more publicity" or "better advertising," others suggested ways to promote the program to make it more visible. These included "maintaining a daily working relationship with other interested agencies," "creating groups and leaders to serve the community," creating community awareness, working through the school districts, working with the public libraries or community colleges, placing "posters in areas where the larger percentage of need can be found," and mounting "a marketing campaign for business and public awareness." To many community agency representatives it was clear that adult basic education needs to "publicize (its) program to the general public and to related agencies" and needs to "get information about ABE into the hands of those who most need it. We already use many strategies but new ones are necessary in order to reach as many potential clients as possible."

Those in the third large category said that they had "no suggestions--they do a good job." Praise for the local programs ranged from the "program is adequate" to "we have the best in the state." Those who expanded upon their praise indicated the program is doing an excellent job of serving community needs. One TEC representative said that "they are already in the different areas of town, they work well with our city's resources, they are available when we call them for our applicants. They do a very good job." A superintendent indicated that "we cooperate with them in every way possible." Those in this category felt the ABE programs should "just keep up your good work."

Several comments were made by approximately 10 respondents but did not fit into the larger categories. These included (a) a need to encourage the hard-to-reach to participate in the program, (b) increasing both the federal and state funding level for the program, (c) improving linkages with community agencies and with business and industry, (d) planning programs for the future, (e) improving the staffing for the program, and (f) a statement of the need for the program in their local area.

In summary, linkages with community agencies are a natural part of the adult basic education operation. While linkages exist with a wide variety of agencies, they are strongest with those having a vocational mission. These linkages, however, are not evenly distributed. In a feast or famine syndrome, the cooperation tends to be either extensive or nonexistent. Many of the community agencies would like for the ABE program to become more diverse by offering more vocational, English as a second language, and basic skills courses and by reaching out into the community with more flexible services. They also desire more effective promotion of the ABE program. Criticisms of and recommendations for the local ABE programs in this area must be made with the remembrance that the agencies overwhelmingly gave the ABE programs a positive rating and expressed a feeling that most of the programs are doing a fine job.

Field Comments on Linkage

An interesting phenomenon noted by several of the interviewers was recorded in this way by one. "When we ask about linkages, most of the interviewees are saying: 'Oh, we don't have many linkages.' Then they go on to tell you about all kinds of 'cooperation' that they have with a whole variety of agencies. They see 'linkage' as some kind of formal arrangement required by the law, but 'cooperation' is a normal activity you pursue to make your program

successful and helpful to people." Another interviewer reported a similar occurrence when discussing counseling and referral with a teacher. "This teacher said she did not do much counseling--mainly listening. But later in the interview she talked several times of accompanying students to court, to various agency offices, and to other places in the community ." One co-op director even suggested that the evaluation team stop using the term linkage and replace it with "collaboration."

Certainly throughout Texas there is much collaborative action between ABE programs and various other local organizations. Because of the tendency of teachers and directors to consider much of this as a kind of natural interaction or cooperation with others in the community, much of it goes unreported. Just as certainly, the degree of cooperation or the number and strength of linkages formed is often directly related to the systematic procedures established by the co-op director to formalize such interaction.

A comparison of the procedures for establishing linkages in two different communities will clarify the likely results of establishing linkage procedures. One co-op director showed the evaluation team his formal, but simple, document that he used to establish such ties. He first develops a plan for each group with which he wishes to establish some linkage arrangement. He then writes that agency expressing his wish to set up cooperative ties and includes a copy of the plan. If the agency is agreeable, a meeting is arranged to discuss and modify the plan of cooperation. This is formalized by having representatives of both the ABE program and the cooperating agency sign the final document. (It should be noted that more than one co-op director does use some such formal approach to establishing linkages.) The number of linkages noted in this community is indeed astonishing. When probing about collaboration, members of the evaluation team learned to concentrate carefully on details such as: who was supplying materials for the particular site being visited, who was paying what percentage of a teacher's salary, and who rented or owned the site.

In another co-op the director had gotten into ABE originally through his work in a volunteer agency. This director knew the community intimately and was well known and respected by all. Advisory board members as well as teachers and supervisors interviewed spoke enthusiastically of the many contacts the director had throughout the area. Yet there was no formalized approach to establishing linkages, and this did seem to have noticeable consequences. The director obviously felt some such lack for he spoke in a negative manner about the linkages established with community agencies. The evaluation team members noted a number of very strong collaborative efforts between the ABE program and other agencies; however, there was not degree of linkage with other agencies as noted in the community described above.

The following comments about cooperative efforts between ABE programs and other community organizations were taken from interviews conducted in various parts of the state. Some examples of linkage arrangements are also included.

> I could spend the whole week working just with industry. And we could work with churches--there are so many things we could do together. For example, we could train teachers from churches to train their parishioners to work with illiterates in their church . . . . The rich resources of the community should be used more, e.g., bankers, museums, TEC. We do have strong linkages with public school system. As for JPTA, we have brought employers in once a month and asked them what we could do better. This has really worked well. (Co-op director)

> Program planning goes on all year. For example, right now we are putting together a new program for the 16- to 20-year-olds who will never finish high school. The college, our ABE co-op, and the local ISD are cooperating on this. (Dean of continuing education)

> Because of being in community centers, you meet a lot of the other people and know who to refer people to. The churches do a lot for the programs such as supplying a bilingual counselor. (Teacher)

> We have good relations with those at the state hospital and the junior college, but you have to work at it. Once they know what you are doing, they will really help. We also use the newspaper, posters [students make them], and any other way we can think of to keep the people in these organizations aware of us. (Aide)

Industry is extremely cooperative with the program . . . . We have a class with TRC which teaches "socialization skills." Many of these students have had a hard life, are bitter . . . . If they have the room and the buildings are already open, these agencies are very cooperative about housing classes . . . . Because of such programs, local television stations are extremely cooperative about running our commercials. (Supervisor)

There are many programs with various agencies, such as MHMR and nursing homes, that are both volunteer and funded. For volunteer programs, the co-op provides materials, consultation, and training for that agency's own staff who will be involved . . . . The literacy council is a community-wide effort to reach the same target group. They are working closely with the co-op. We also work with TRC, senior citizen centers, churches and do many presentations to the community through the literacy council . . . . Recently, we have been working with various businesses in outlying areas to use the Giant Step program with assistance from the co-op. We have many interagency agreements and cooperative efforts; the community is very responsive. (Supervisor)

Our students are allowed to take courses in the community college while in ABE program. We work with TRC; Alcoholic Counseling; Community Services; Agency for the Blind; TEC. These cooperative programs were developed from inter-agency meetings; before we only had an informal relationship. (Supervisor)

We work with TRC; DHR; MHMR; the halfway house; juvenile and probation; county jail [inmates and trustees]; almost every nursing home; and the senior citizens activities program. These have developed by reacing out--we invite them over; they make an offer to help. (Teacher)

It is increasingly harder to just recruit for ABE/GED in our geographic area. You need more career orientation. So we are getting more involved with business/industry and older adult programs. The JTPA people are realizing that lots of people need basic skills; we need to work more closely with them. We need similar cooperation with business and industry--too often their training does not include basic skills. But we really need a full-time administrative position to establish these cooperative arrangements. That person should be accessible and spend full time making contacts. Program people should contact program people. We all need to get out of the office and into the field . . . . We also have linkages with the Social Service, Literacy Council, Learning Disabled, business/industry, volunteer agencies, and the ministerial alliance. (Co-op director)

We are working with the city; we got release time for workers to take class. But we need to keep having periodic meetings with them because the people involved change. (Co-op director)

We set up training program for all the deputies in the county jail and hold classes in all public libraries. We are also working with some industries--some even give workers comp time to study . . . . The advisory board helped link with industry and business. (Co-op director)

Problems in Establishing Linkages

Although most of the discussion about cooperative efforts with other community agencies and organizations was quite positive, several problem areas were noted. The amount of time that must be dedicated to this effort if it is to be successful was noted as a problem by several administrators. Some suggested this was the type of task that administrative assistants could fill well if funding was available for such assistants. Funding was also mentioned as a problem in that cooperative programs were occasionally so successful that they had to be cancelled because the local ABE program did not have the funding to continue that offering. A point made by several directors applies both to funding and time; building cooperative programs is not something that can be done once and then forgotten about. Like public awareness, cooperative efforts need constant nourishing.

The evaluation team also noted some insecurity and lack of knowledge that interfered with efforts to build linkages. Apologies such as "I contact them every year but they just don't seem interested" or "You've got to find the right people within each organization" seemed at times to mask requests for help in establishing procedures for building cooperative arrangements. The most promising techniques for doing so were the suggestions for

formalizing agreements between the ABE program and a cooperating agency mentioned above and for involving advisory boards in this process. Implicit in these suggestions was long range planning. As one director declared, neither you nor your advisory board can sell cooperation unless you are clear on what you are trying to achieve. Several added the point that cooperation was a two-way effort; the adult education program needs to refer or offer services in return. One learning center director spoke of the procurement of private funding to offer non-ABE services as an example of such a mutual effort to interchange services.

Several comments taken from on-site interviews are offered below. These examples are meant to demonstrate the difficulties and the successes in efforts to build linkages between adult education and other services.

> They had forgotten all about adult education and didn't even know what adult education was doing for the community. And this was a Chamber of Commerce committee promoting awareness of community service organizations! (Advisory board member)

> I leave all that working with other agencies to the supervisor. (Teacher)

> Referals go both ways. We have good working relationships with all agencies in town, but then we should because our advisory board is made up of people from these agencies . . . . You do have to be careful that these activities don't take up too much of your time; my full-time staff members develop these relationships. We have a document to show agencies what we can do for the community; it also serves as an audit trail of activities. Also, we put together a handbook for volunteer programs. It describes our program and alerts volunteer programs to what they need to do to be successful. There is a signature line on the document to formalize our cooperative arrangements. (Co-op director)

> I've gotten myself on the advisory boards for some of the other agencies. Then I can point out areas of duplication and lead the way to cooperative arrangements . . . . To be effective in linkage, you must be clear--have a goal which is clearly expressed and written down. (Co-op director)

> You can link with business by selling them on the link between education and productivity. I tell them we can provide teachers if they can provide space and time. But the problem with this is it won't lead to any additional funding. If we can fund the program, there is no reason for others not to cooperate. (Co-op director)

Importance of Linkages with Other Agencies

Throughout the interviews the positive impact of linkages between the ABE program and other community agencies was quite evident. The value placed on such cooperative arrangements was also supported by the responses of directors on their mailed survey. The majority accorded great importance to all aspects of such cooperation except for obtaining additional funding or support services such as child care through cooperative agreements. Most had experienced moderate of little success in these areas. However, they did recognize great benefit from linkages in increased community support and public awareness, in reaching hard-to-reach segments of the population, and in expanding services through referral. Aid in recruitment and in feedback on the community's perception of the ABE program were additional benefits. Detailed information on directors attitudes regarding the benefits of cooperation are given in Table 3.

Table 3
Percentage of Benefits from Cooperation with Other Agencies

Benefit	Great	Mod.	Little	None
Increased recruitment	55	37	8	0
Expanded services	63	37	0	0
Provide support services	32	37	26	5
Extend to hard-to-reach	63	29	8	0
Greater public awareness	63	37	0	0
Additional funds	18	40	29	13
Get program feedback	53	40	8	0
More community support	74	26	0	0

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of adult learners into the adult basic education program is a vital but complex task. It is dependent upon obvious factors such as the needs of the potential clientele and the quality of the instruction offered. Other, less obvious factors also can have a dominant influence upon student turnout. Current economic conditions for example were noted by insightful students, teachers, and administrators as having a major impact on the number and type of students entering ABE programs. The reputation of the local instructional staff for patience and concern for the individual appears to be another such factor. To these motivational elements must be added the program awareness issue. Publicizing programs to the less literate segments of society cannot be accomplish through simple printed announcements.

During the on-site visits the subject of recruitment of students was discussed with numerous teachers, administrators, and students. The following section of this report will begin with a summary of the perceptions of staff members as to why adults enter adult basic education programs. A second section will describe efforts used to make potential clientele aware of the program. The final segment will use student input to verify or correct reported staff perceptions of student motivation for attendance and effectiveness of recruitment strategies.

Why Adult Students Enter ABE Programs

Teachers and administrators spoke of two major sets of motivational factors that they believed to be most important in influencing adults to enroll in ABE programs. One set of reasons related to economic factors and the other to personal fulfillment. A significant number of staff members also spoke of specific events or needs that triggered entry into programs.

Economic motivators were more often attributed to younger students. Many teachers spoke of young people who dropped out of school for various reasons but who in a short time came to the realization that they would make no progress in life without a better set of skills or certification of high school completion. These students came to get skills needed to land a certain job or to enter a training program, a branch of military service, or a college. Current or local economic conditions often had a significant impact on the age and educational level of such students as they enrolled for basic education.

While personal development needs were recognized as influencing all age groups, staff members more frequently tied them to the recruitment of the more mature student. Wanting to be "part of" society, "credible," a "contributer" were words used to describe the driving force of many older individuals. Sometimes these feelings were couched in terms of getting off welfare or satisfying socialization needs, but usually they had a great deal to do with the individual's need for self-respect and for the respect of others.

So many ABE staff members spoke of the importance of triggering events in relation to student recruitment that the evaluation team hypothesized that some crisis or trauma in an individual's life might be necessary to motivate that person to enroll in an ABE program. When questioned about this, many teachers agreed that such incidents were reported frequently by entering students. Others saw limited applicability of this theory, giving more import to situational factors such as a friend's encouragement or notice of a program's availability. Many trigger events related to children, to job situations, and to personal relations.

Listed below are a number of comments from on-site interviews representative of teacher and administrator insights as to why adults enter basic education programs.

> For the young, economics is the driving force; for the older, the GED is needed to keep a job; for the elderly, the driving force is their own pleasure and satisfaction. (Teacher)

> They come because of some specific need, such as: the need to drive, to buy groceries, to shop better, to help their children. (Aide)

> The oil fields are bad for recruitment. People can earn $15 an hour there with no education or training while a well-educated person cannot get a job in the area for more than $7 an hour. (Teacher)

> I think they want to be part, if not of the main

stream culture, at least part of what is everyday life--understanding people, getting a decent job, being part of the culture. (Teacher)

A lot of the men come for economic reasons. But they want to be credible too, you know, being able to speak and having someone listen to them. (Teacher)

The older students come to learn anything they can. The younger students want a GED for military entrance. Then, there is a group who come only for socialization. They need consumer information or nutrition help . . . and a feeling of accomplishment and self-worth. (Teacher)

They need the GED, but they want to learn to speak English in order to communicate and function better in U.S. society. (Teacher)

They enter the program to get their GED so they can get into another training program. Some come for social reasons, to make friends, some for job advancement. (Aide)

They come into the program because they do not want to stay on low incomes and because they want to get a job. Some want to help their children with their homework, and a few want to go to college. (Teacher)

They are motivated to earn more money, to get off welfare, and to get better jobs. (Aide)

They want better jobs, to go on to college and to get into nursing school. Their friends and relatives told them about this program. (Teacher)

Many of them got married very young. The children are beginning to come home and ask questions, and they feel "I want to be prepared so that maybe I can help with some of these things before they get so far along I can't do it." (Teacher)

Our evening classes are the biggest ones because of the working force. They want to understand their boss; they want to better themselves--betterment seems to be the main trend here. (Teacher)

Most want the GED because the job market requires it; it's necessary in order to get a job or promotion; or to go to school to get higher training. The ESL student wants to learn English and then go to college. College is a big goal for our students. (Teacher)

ESL students want to help their children with homework. Some own businesses and want to talk to customers; others are embarrassed because they are not able to respond when people talk to them in English. GED students want that certificate so they can go to college [TSTI or Pan American]. In the past, a job was the main motivation. (Teacher)

Mostly it's economical--they have been out of school a while and can see the kind of life ahead of them. It is a life without skills; but they want to get ahead--a job advance or to go to college. Education will help them change so they see a use for education. (Teacher) One reason they are here is because they don't want to be dependent on others. Also some are here because something traumatic has happened in their life; they want to change [and education is the outlet]. Some finally see where they can go. (Teacher)

Publicizing the Adult Education Program

In addition to understanding students' motivation for enrolling in a program, a successful recruiter must know how to get out the word of the program's availability and how to present it as an attractive resource. To provide insight into these matters, the interviews included questions on publicizing ABE programs. There was unanimous agreement among those interviewed that the most effective technique for recruiting students and publicizing the program was word-of-mouth communication. Most students come to programs because a relative, friend, or acquaintance encourages them to do so. This points up an important aspect of recruitment; that is, publicizing a program involves both widespread awareness of a programs existence and location and also positive attitudes regarding the programs friendliness and effectiveness. Most undereducated adults are too defensive to risk entry into a program that might not be "safe."

Other methods of publicity offer useful support to word-of-mouth recruitment. Certainly close working relations with other service agencies were recognized by many ABE staff members as very helpful in the enlistment of

students. Referrals from such agencies were frequently mentioned. Television ads were rated above print announcements by a number of interviewees, but flyers sent home with children and posters placed in churches, laundromats, and community centers were recognized as useful by some. Apparently, the more public awareness there is of the ABE program in a local community, the more likely needy adults are to turn to that program when special circumstances or special acquaintances urge them to do so.

Several comments made by teachers or administrators about methods of publicizing programs are included below.

> Advertise! Notes from school and ads in the paper help, but most come because someone talks them into it. They are scared, but the student says: "I'm going. I'm doing it." (Aide)

> Do a good job of what you are doing, and you won't have room for them. You can hardly advertise for literacy students because they can't read; but if they have a friend who is learning, they want in too. (Co-op director)

> Sometimes an employer or the Armed Forces recruiter tells them to come. They also come in pairs, as friends, and because of social needs. Locally, the radio ads seem to work very well. (Teacher)

> The best advertisement is word-of-mouth. We can tell when the TV spot has been run; we get phone calls. Economic crunch has also made a difference. For some, it is what someone else has said. (Learning center director)

> Mine was desperation. I don't think any come until they feel its needed. I realized I couldn't be a waitress until I was 50 years old. I knew of program because of TV commercials. (Aide)

> The best methods of publicity are friends and family and people who have been in the program. Referal is also good; for example, probation, schools, half-way house, MHMR, and the college. Most need the educational background to get a job or training. (Learning center director)

> Sometimes it is job pressure, but a lot of times they see what happened to a friend who went. The majority come because they have talked to someone who has been in the program. Some women need to get out of the house, and they learn the ABE program is a good place to improve themselves. (Aide)

> Many are referred by juvenile office, Rehab, MHMR, and school counselors. They desperately need to learn English, get a driver's license, and learn to read and write better. (Teacher)

> Real recruiting is through word-of-mouth by students and by each local district doing local recruitment. On the co-op level some general level "awareness" advertising can be done. I carry with me publicity folders that I leave with people I talk to. (Co-op director)

> Recruiting is really setting up a social network; personal contact is the key. (Co-op director)

> We conduct an advertising blitz in September [2 to 4 weeks] before the programs start. We send out flyers through the public schools with kids in grades 1 to 5; do radio announcements; have TV interviews; and so forth. Once the programs start, we depend on word-of-mouth. (Co-op director)

Two concluding points made by co-op directors are worth noting. The first is that recruitment differs greatly in urban and rural areas. The urban program has many more resources available to it. Once good relations are established with other service and communication agencies and organizations, recruitment takes care of itself. However, numerous people in various positions pointed out that programs in rural areas are often lacking not only the supportive relationships with other agencies but also the full-time staff and volume of graduates to promote public awareness of the benefits available through Adult Basic Education. Rural programs are often started to meet the needs of a specific group. Once they have completed the program, it is sometimes difficult to maintain the minimum number of students. In addition, the limited funding available for ABE discourages recruitment efforts at times. Why recruit students into a program that might not be maintained long enough to help them?

A few quotations from on-site interviews are given below to support these conclusions.

> In cities recruiting is not really a problem. You

do need an organized plan, and you need to set it up like a systems approach. But the real secret is having good relations with all the social service agencies. Use your advisory committee here. But in rural areas you need to get someone to go out and recruit. It's hard to get teachers to do recruiting. This is an administrative responsibility. Besides, I tried to train teachers to recruit, but this was not successful. (Co-op director)

The problem with recruiting is that you may over recruit and because of limited funding not be able to deliver. (Co-op director)

Even if we reach more people with the message, there is not enough money to serve all who need it. (Teacher)

Recruit? I don't have enough money to take care of the people who come. I'm begging for enough money to take care of those who are banging on the door. (Supervisor)

Students' Comments on Recruitment

Most of the students interviewed supported the ideas advocated by teachers and administrators regarding recruitment and publicity. If anything, they were even stronger in their emphasis of word-of-mouth recruitment being the major mode of attraction to adult education programs. A sister-in-law, an aunt, my mother, a friend, a boss, a fellow church member, a probation officer, a neighbor . . . all of these and many others were mentioned as the reason for enrollment. A large number also spoke of the GED as a condition of advancement on the job or a necessity for getting into the college program desired. In addition, the comments of the students definitely supported the importance of linkages with other community agencies. Many came to the programs because it was recommended by someone in such an agency. Definitely, the students interviewed placed more emphasis on people than on publicity when they talked of their reasons for enrolling in ABE programs.

A number of quotations from student interviews are listed below. It was difficult to limit the number of student comments in this instance because the comments were so individualistic. Yet for every comment listed here, there were probably several other similar statements not included.

I learned about the program through Texas Rehab. I need a GED to get into a training program in computer technology. Rehab will send me to the training program once I get my GED. (Single parent student)

I learned about the program at the Rehab center. I enrolled in order to get a GED so I could get a non-factory job. I was injured at the factory where I worked and am now on constant medicine which causes side effects. (Female student)

My aunt told me about the program and encouraged me to enroll. I want a GED for job opportunities, and I want to improve my personal skills. (Young female student)

I saw a sign about the ABE program in the unemployment office. I wanted to learn what I had missed in school. (Student)

I learned about the GED program from the Employment Office. I need the GED to get a job so I can move out of my daughter's house and be more independent. I have a job offer in Dallas but need the GED. (Student)

I learned about the program from television. I want to help my children when they enroll in school, and I will stay until I get my GED. (Young mother)

My parents told me about the program. I want to enter the Air Force and need a GED to do so. I dropped out because of drugs but came back to the program. (Young male student)

Most of us want to learn English. We were born in non-English-speaking countries and are very appreciative of opportunities to learn English. (ESL student)

I learned about the program through the church I attend. My husband is studying in the Dallas seminary, and I eventually want to study there also. (Young wife)

A friend from Korea told me about the ESL classes. I want to become a citizen and develop my own private commercial business here. I like the informal classes and intend to tell others about the program. (Student)

I was referred to the learning center from the

college student testing program. I had very low entrance examination scores and hope these classes will enable me to raise those scores. (Young female student)

A teacher from school called and recommended the program. Also, a friend encouraged me to attend. I feel a need for the program to prepare for trade school. (Female student)

I looked up the program in the telephone book--Adult Learning Center. I want to become a bookkeeper and am pursuing business skills for a job. (Young student)

We enrolled in ABE to learn mathematics and to be able to help our grandchildren. We want to be able to do things better. (Older couple)

I'm staying at the mission. I'm tired of being a dishwasher. My boss told me about these adult classes. I want to pass the GED with flying colors. Then I want to go to college. (Student)

I want to go to college and do something quick. I don't want to go to school the rest of my life. I want to pay my own way. I don't want to be dependent on others. (Student)

All of my family encouraged me. I am a custodian at Shreiner College. The professors there encouraged me. My wife is my moral support. I got tired of being low man. (Mature student)

Basically, I just got tired of being a low paid custodian. I'm also a qualified electrician, but I can't get my license until I have my GED. (Male student)

A friend told me about the program. I had no education and no skills. They help me here, but I work hard too! (Student)

Before I came here, a lady went from house to house to see how many would be interested in adult classes. Some were ashamed, but I'm not. It's not my fault I didn't get an education before. (Older student)

I'm here to better myself, to read and spell. I want to read Sunday school lessons and the Bible. I want to learn enough to be a Sunday school teacher. (Student)

I came to the school to learn English grammar. I want to be able to speak English better. I work at an electric company. (Female student)

I want to know how to spell and also wanted to refresh my memory. This makes me feel good to learn. I learned about the adult classes from my parole officer. (Student)

I saw a poster about the program to get a GED when I was at work. I can't get a supervisor's job until I have my GED. (Mature student)

I heard about this GED class at work. They gave me an application form to complete for the GED program when I applied for a supervisor job. (Student)

I came to the program because I heard rumors that a GED was good to have. My friends were truck drivers; then they got their GED and became supervisors. I think I might be able to do the same thing. (Working student)

At the office where I work for the city of San Antonio, they told me about this program and encouraged me to attend classes. (Student)

I found out about this GED program from my supervisor at work. I regret not finishing school. I want to get my GED so I can join the regular army. (Young student)

I learned about the program through work. All of the promotions now require a GED. (Student)

My friend was coming to school here and told me about it. I want to go to college and need to know English to do that. (Young female student)

I learned about this program from a neighbor friend who was coming to the center. I want to be able to speak English so I can talk to people in the neighborhood and everywhere in the city. (Older woman)

I came to learn to communicate better, to improve my education. When I complete my GED, I want to study typing and have another business skill; but first my English must be improved. (Student)

I read about these classes in the local newspaper. I can read some English but not too well.

My job ended when the company moved out of the city, and I decided to take some classes. (Out-of-work student)

My daughter encouraged me to come to these adult classes. She told me that it was never too late to learn. I felt lost. I didn't know how to read or write or to explain myself. I wanted to learn these things. I had been busy with my family before and couldn't come to classes. Now they are grown. Now it is my turn to learn. (Older student)

I heard about this program from one of my friends. I was afraid but wanted to learn English. I need English in my work. (Working man)

They needed a lead man [foreman], but they wanted someone who could speak English and Spanish, a bilingual person . . . . I had been on the job 10 years and was next for promotion, but I couldn't get it because of the English barrier. (Mature student)

I'm retired and have nothing to do--just hang around the house all day long so I came to the ABE program to learn some math and to read good so that I can be the reader of scripture in my church. (Retired male student)

I found out about the program from a friend who teaches at Odessa College and attends the same church. The friend had the learning center send me a card telling about the program. (Older student)

When I first decided to come to ABE, I thought I might be too old. But I came anyway and stayed. (Student)

I immediately enrolled in college courses upon passing the GED, but I also continue here primarily to improve my English skills. I feel I am too old for anyone to hire me for a job, so I attend for my own satisfaction. (Returning student)

I learned about the program through a friend who knew the co-op director. I came because I wanted to learn to speak, read, and write English. Although I had been in the US about 17 years, I did not come to school before because I was busy making a living . . . . People come into ABE because they are ambitious. You know--you want to learn, you want to know how to use the correct words when you speak. (Older student)

I learned about the program through my mobility teacher from the State Commission for the Blind. (Handicapped student)

I have a daughter in high school and feels it is important that I set an example for her to stay in school. (Mother)

I applied for a job at the local hospital which required a high school diploma. The learning center director's husband works at this hospital and told me about the program. (Student)

I knew there was some kind of learning center, but I didn't know where it was or how it functioned. I feel like more people would come if they would tell about it more--advertise it more. (Student)

I am going to school so that I can get a job and support myself. When my children started getting the new math in school, I decided to find out what that was all about. So I started calling around in town, and the local university referred me to the learning center. (Mature female student)

STUDENTS MOST IN NEED

There has been a constant effort within the Adult Basic Education program to direct a significant portion of the programs resources to those adults of our society considered "most in need." This effort has been called for in the federal regulations and has been supported in state guidelines. Frequently, another phrase, "hardest to reach," has been associated with the term "most in need" to connote the idea that it may be very difficult to attract such individuals to educational programs even though may need help more than others. Various theories have been used to describe those most in need and hardest to reach, but usually those in this group are among the most economically deprived, have the lowest levels of formal schooling, belong to some minority group, and live in isolated rural areas or segregated urban neighborhoods. Personally, they tend to be cut off from the mainstream of society and to be alienated from, if not in rebellion with, the powers and resources of the mainstream system.

Many of those interviewed by the evaluation team recognized the programs responsibility to reach out to those most in need. Most, however, admitted that their efforts to do so were not very successful. "We're reaching quite a few but not nearly enough" is the way one co-op director put it. Another was more blunt: "We have barely scratched the surface!" Both comments made during the interviews and data gathered from student surveys indicate that less than 7% of those in the program can be truly classified as those "most in need." According to estimates made by Martin, about 13% of the undereducated of our society fall into this classification. This would indicate that ABE programs in Texas are reaching proportionally half of the number of the hardest to reach as those with less demanding needs.

What is needed to reach a larger percentage of those most in need? Several of those interviewed had noteworthy ideas; some were definitely making serious efforts to reach this clientele. Most agreed that many such potential learners could not be expected to come to schools or other centers in which they did not feel welcome or comfortable. Thus, undereducated adults who feel "at home" only in their own neighborhoods must be reached in those neighborhoods. The instructional personnel who staff these outreach programs need to be able to operate without all the support of the central program but even more need to able to relate to the needs of people of the neighborhood. They need to be given the time to muster resources, deal with personal problems, work with others in the community, and must not be restricted by inflexible rules of the system. A number of directors openly admitted that as long as the allocation of resources to such activities would probably result in lower total student contact hours than other approaches, they would be reluctant to risk such efforts. Some way of recognizing such efforts in allocation of state funds was repeatedly called for by local administrators.

Some of the ideas, plans, and present efforts to reach those most in need are offered below.

> We've reached some but I think we need a different approach. I think we can teach aides to teach two or three and let them go into the target area and find people who would never come out to a program. We'd meet with aides once a week for training and support. (Co-op director)

> We need a new approach, such as through storefronts, churches, or community centers. This demands flexibility on the number of students in each class. Perhaps each school district could set up one experimental program within a minority area with their top teacher. Or TEA could earmark special funds for such programs. Community Education might be the supportive vehicle for this. The teacher would have to be experienced and good, perhaps working half time in the learning center and 20 hours in outreach. TEA would have to provide structure for this "Neighborhood Adult Basic" education; that is, guidelines and funding not tied to regular allotment. [Perhaps $20,000 for a NAB teacher and program.] Special training or networking would be needed for these teachers. Preparation time [60 days to full semester] should be granted to meet people, locate resources, prepare, meet the folks. A 2 year funding cycle would be essential. (Project director)

> One of the churches in the black section of town requested a reading class from the literacy council. Because there were not enough students for a class and because the students won't leave their area of town, another teacher and I

are volunteering our time to teach a small group at this black church until enough people can come to make a regular class. Many of these students are on grade levels 1 to 3; they have never attended school--no school was provided because they were black. (Supervisor)

We are reaching more low readers because of our literacy council. But to reach these we need a good comprehensive plan. Too much of our work is hit and miss. We're not reaching those most in need through the regular program. We need a full-time recruiter to do leg work. (Co-op director)

We need the outlying classes to reach some people. They feel: "You got to be smart to go to the college." (Teacher)

Although I feel the program is reaching many of the most in need, I feel it could reach many more. I think the ESL program is reaching those who need it, but not the GED. "Welfare mothers" are some of the most in need group, and they could be reached through more cooperative efforts with DHR. (Teacher)

You don't know who needs it the most. I believe anyone who doesn't have education needs it. We have a student who recently graduated from high school who can't read at all. He is really in need! (Supervisor)

WHAT STUDENTS GAIN FROM THE PROGRAM

Self-Confidence

There are many things that the adult students gain from the Adult Basic Education program, but there is near universal agreement among both teachers and students that the most important gains come in self-confidence. Some teachers being interviewed would begin talking about academic gains, about improved employment status, and about plans for the future. They would then abruptly pause and say: "Of course, none of these changes were possible until the adult learner began feeling confident about his ability to change. Self-confidence is the most important thing they gain from the program." Others immediately responded with comments about the importance of building individual self-concepts; they had no doubt that this was the most important task of the teacher and the most important gain of the student.

A conceptual base for the teachers' insistance on self-confidence as the most important gain for the adult learners was not difficult to discover. The vast majority of ABE students entered the program with some sense of past failure and with varying levels of fear that they would not be able to succeed in their present learning attempts. Such fear of failure is not only a self-defeating prophesy but also in the case of adult learning is a serious impediment to learning. Adults tend not to enter or remain in situations in which failure is likely. If caught in such a predicament, they use their energy to defend themselves rather than to grow or learn. When so threatened, they tend to become alienated from society and distrustful of any sources of power--including information providers. It is virtually impossible to change or learn when one's self-concept keeps nagging about the likelihood of failure.

The teachers in the field had a much simpler defense for making the improvement of self-concepts their first goal. They made statements such as: "Once a person is convinced he can learn, he does learn; and once he begins to learn, he sees it is possible to improve himself as a citizen, a parent, a worker, and in so many other ways." Improvement of the self-concept in their view was not something nice to do for students or something extrinsic to the learning process; it was an essential first step in helping adults to learn and to grow as productive citizens. As one learning-center teacher put it:

> What they really get out of the program is self-esteem. Each student comes to us needing something different; they ask, and if we can do it, we do it. One might want to speak English or help her kids with math; another needs to fill out an application for a scholarship or prepare for a driver's license exam. They find out they can do and then anything becomes possible!

The following comments describe teachers' insights into the personal development that results from students' experiences in the adult basic education program. The are indicative of dozens of similar comments from teachers in the field indicating that self-confidence is the most important student gain from the program.

> If you couldn't read or spell your own name and if after 5 or 6 months you came out and know your name--you don't have to make an X any more--wouldn't you be on a high for a long time? They now know they can do it--no matter how old. (Teacher)

> They need to develop a sense of personal worth. Many have a sense of failure. The young don't always trust the world of adults even though we get some whose parents have done everything for them. (Teacher)

> A new one comes in and sits over here alone. Then as the weeks go by they become integrated with the rest of them. They're no longer a dummy and by themselves. They have learned they can do something. (Aide)

> Many have had a bad experience in school or in life in general. My first obligation is to get their eyes off the floor and looking at me . . . . At first it is a slow and tedious process. Once they catch a vision of who they are and what they can become, then it goes very, very quickly . . . . A teacher can have a warm and encouraging relation with a student and still remain "the teacher" rather than a friend. (Teacher)

> They get so much out of it: self-confidence, being able to accomplish a goal. Some have not even thought about the importance of being able to perform some of the academic skills.

But they learn something and they rush home to show their families! . . . They accomplish so many things it would take me an hour to tell you all the things. (Aide)

To me the most important thing they get out of the program is a sense of worth, self-confidence. Probably half or more could do their own studying and pass the GED--except for the self-concept. That's what we really get across. (Learning center director)

It does make a difference in their lives. You can see it from not being able to look you in the eye and a dead fish handshake at first to a firm handshake. From poor taste in dress to good taste, well made up, neat. (Teacher)

What do they get from the program? Self-esteem and the GED. They get an understanding that makes them feel positive about themselves. Hopefully they learn reading, writing, and conversation skills. (Teacher)

They get self-confidence. They learn to meet people and blend in rather than stay in their own group. They learn self-help skills. (Teacher)

Students gain self-confidence, they improve in their oral skills, and they learn to interact more. They learn to answer in sentences. The teacher sees progression and growth. (Teacher)

They increase their skills and get a feeling of success. They change their concept that they are a failure. This is so different from regular classroom. They see that in a different forum that they can make it. Here there is not the competition as in public school. (Teacher)

I feel like everyone has had enough failures in their life without having one more piled on top . . . . I try to make sure they don't feel like a failure. I think encouragement is what they get here. (Aide)

Self-confidence is always number one. It is remarkable--as they gain their successes, how the confidence changes that person to a more out-going, "I'm an OK" person. (Supervisor)

What they get is self-worth. You can tell the difference just by looking at them; there is a spark, a difference in attitude. (Teacher)

Other Gains

The gain in self-confidence results not only in personal growth and development; it also leads to academic and vocational growth. Success in learning is in direct proportion to confidence in one's ability to learn. Thoughts of getting into a vocational training program or of going on to college become possible once some success in learning is experienced. Many teachers commented on the growth they observed in students as workers, as scholars, as citizens, and as parents. Since the express purpose of the federal legislation on Adult Basic Education is to "acquire basic skills necessary to function in society" and to "enable them to become more employable, productive and responsible citizens," it is vital to emphasize that teachers frequently referred to such growth as the gain students got from the program.

It is also important to note that not all problems are solved by entry into a basic education program. Some teachers were quite blunt in pointing out that academic training does not necessarily transfer to everyday living. What good is a GED if a father still cannot get a job and support his family? What good are reading or computation skills if a person cannot use them to cope with the problems of living? Success in the program has to relate to success in the real world. Such concerns were also frequently mentioned by ABE staff members.

The following quotes are indicative of comments made by teaching staff members regarding academic and vocational gains made by ABE participants. They were taken from interviews conducted in various parts of Texas.

One man that came was a minister who could not read at all. [He could pray a good prayer, but he couldn't read a word out of the bible.] His prime objective was to read the bible because he was a minister. (Teacher)

My GED students--I knew that they could pass the test, and it wasn't going to do a thing for them. They were going to be right back where they were only with that paper in their pocket. But they didn't have the life skills--something! That's what we've got to give them. (Teacher)

When the ESL students can look at and listen to TV and understand it, they know they are learning English. When the students in ABE

know what 25% means, they know they are learning math. Our students are making progress, and they know it. (Aide)

The students are so proud when they meet me on the street and can talk to me in English . . . . They feel "fantastic" when they finish the class and can speak English. (Teacher)

What were they going to do? They didn't have the job skills. There are 11 million people out there out of work, and they can't just go out with a GED. They're not going to get a job. (Teacher)

When students did not get it along the way, this gives them a second change. It's good to have ABE so that it's not something that's held against them forever . . . . and it shows them there's a way to make a change and to be employed. (Teacher)

A woman who was a young 50 enrolled. She came everyday just like a regular school. She had three daughters who were teachers. It took a while, but she got her GED; she then applied for a local scholarship. Now she is in college working on business degree. (Learning center director)

After they complete ABE, many of our students go into credit courses at college. I've noticed that most of these people are talking about careers now especially the young ones . . . . They had never thought about a career before. (Teacher)

Locally the concept of the program is great. Many of our students go on to the community college; so many not only end up with a GED, but with some college credit. (Supervisor)

Folks are responsive and so grateful. But you've got to encourage them and show them they have made progress . . . . I use folders with past work. It takes an average of one and a half years to get to third grade level; another year to sixth grade level. They look back at the papers in their folder and know they have made progress. (Aide)

It is wrong to have your primary objective to pass the test. I was a 9th grade dropout myself, so I can say this as a student and as a teacher. We need to teach people how to cope with life. (Project director)

In the GED program some have accomplished their goals when they pass the tests; others continue past the GED because they have other personal learning goals. (Teacher)

What they get out of the program is both personal satisfaction and the chance to go after those jobs--you know, the one's that take a high school diploma. (Teacher)

One group thought the president was to blame for everything--all the laws, declaring war, everything. They didn't know how the government works. One lady who was 33 had never voted. She said: "I was ignorant of what it was all about." (Teacher)

When they have completed my class, I hope that they realize that learning is exciting, that learning is a lifelong process. Especially in the age we're in right now, there are so many new things and so many new skills . . . . I try to stress the future. (Teacher)

As the teachers talked of the gains students made during their basic education experiences, they mentioned several factors that they considered vital to such growth. One of these was the need for successful models for the students. For example, one teacher spoke of the need in her area for models of business leaders who were successful in the general society yet who managed to retain their Hispanic culture. In a similar manner, a number of teachers and administrators described with pride their local arrangements to provide recognition for those who had made progress in the program. They felt that such recognition was integral to progress for many undereducated adults. When students spoke of factors contributing to success, it was almost always in terms of a patient, caring teacher.

The following comments taken from field interviews give some additional insight into the importance of models and of recognition for the adult basic education student.

A lot is that when they come in here there is a shame of not having graduated. That's where I come in. I can tell them of my experience not having a diploma and how I got one here. (Aide)

We need models. We have to be able to say: "Here is a successful Hispanic" who has retained his/her cultural values and is succeeding in the system or community. (Teacher/community developer)

After they have been in the program a while, they feel good about themselves; they have more confidence. Then they go out and encourage friends and family to come. They have experienced success, so they are able to encourage others. (Teacher)

At our recognition days, we use students to give talks. They get up in front of the people and tell how proud they are of their gains. The people see them, the community sees them, and they feel good about themselves. (Co-op director)

ESL students need a certificate of some kind. They need something they can work for that says they have accomplished something. (Teacher)

There is an awards ceremony every year for those who complete programs. Students get to speak for a minute or two. For them it is the best day of their life. The students can't thank the teachers enough, but it is the students who have made the gain and who have accomplished something. (Teacher)

Student Views on Program Benefits

As indicated above, teachers believe that the most important student gain is the self-confidence that makes it possible for individuals to learn and grow. It is such growth that leads to entry into vocational or college training programs, to better parenting and citizenry skills, and to personal and social development. But what of student insight into what they gained from the Adult Basic Education program? For the most part, their comments strongly supported the views of the teachers. For example, they spoke of how they could now read and spell and of how proud they were of this. They smiled and said: "I'm proud to say I can now talk to you in English." They talked of being able to help their children in school, of plans to go to college, of learning how to learn. This was always with pride at the discovery that they were not stupid and that they could learn like anyone else. Perhaps they did not explicitly mention growth in self-confidence as frequently as teachers did, but it was there implicitly in many of their comments.

Students also spoke frequently of how they now felt they could fit into the world around them. They knew they could go out and compete for jobs or get into a college program and "make something of themselves." This extended also to citizenship duties. They were more inclined to vote . They understood what was going on around them. They were more likely to talk to others. This last point of being able to talk to others seemed to be especially significant for many of their comments connoted that they now saw themselves as part of this democratic society, ready and willing to take on the duties of citizen and neighbor.

A few direct quotes from student interviews allow the students themselves to speak about the benefits they gained from the Adult Basic Education program.

I feel I can now relate better to other people and realize I can learn at any age. I am not afraid to try new things as I once was.

Now I can converse with friends and I can help my children. Most important, I now feel that all U.S. people do not dislike foreigners and feel more happy and secure about living here.

I think that I am now motivated to continue to learn. I don't feel so bad about myself and see that others feel better about me. I know that my academic abilities have improved, but they are not yet sufficient for college.

I'm proud of myself! I feel I can do as well as anybody. I'm more comfortable around people and have already identified other learning goals for the future.

I learn. I'll keep coming until the teacher tells me I can get a good job some place.

I can now talk on the telephone . . . . They helped me to get my driver's license. They helped me to speak to the police when I got a traffic ticket. Now I talk to everybody.

I've started to think more about learning and think about it differently than I used to. I'd like to get more education.

At work they didn't expect much from me. Now that I'm in school they expect more, especially the superintendents. They don't holler at me any more.

I have noticed that I'm not scared of learning. I used to be afraid that I wouldn't be able to learn. Now I look forward to learning.

My character changed a lot. I was different. I got mad a lot. Now I don't get mad very often.

I have learned a lot of things: like I can read signs. I couldn't do that when I came. I think now I am more friendly. I can explain things more.

It's going to take me a long time [to get the GED], but I'm not going to get discouraged. I think that other students have gained a great deal in the program; for example, they have learned to read well . . . . Since I have been coming to ABE I have been listening to the news on television more because I can understand it better . . . . You are as smart as you think you are. Before you can achieve, you have to believe in yourself.

I feel better about myself because I think everybody needs to have something about themselves to feel good about. I just feel more important. I've seen so many people like me . . . that have never gotten anywhere. Then I see people who have finished school, who maybe are going to college, who have really made something of themselves. I feel like taking this step has given me opportunities--not just this job but maybe other jobs. This one step will kick me up several steps. I feel more confident about things.

I like the class; it lets you find out who you are. I had gone to 12th grade, but didn't learn anything . . . . I have improved myself 100% in reading and spelling. I got it through the teacher.

I think now that I have been here I can deal with society. Before I was just doing temporary stuff; now I can take on anything! . . . I never knew there was so much to learn about the next person . . . . I had been slow learner from beginning. I knew I needed help, but did not know where to get it; now I know where to get help. I think I can now accomplish things.

It helped me find out that there are several things I'm good at. I'm going to keep studying . . . . It is important to see your own progress. Then you can see that you will benefit from education. You will learn if you do your assignment; I know that now . . . . It has given me high hopes that I can step out and get a job in an area that I want. The opportunity is now available. I can show the GED and some college courses on a job application when get out of prison. The first thing that I want to do is go to college.

I was a loner; I used to stutter. I felt I didn't have anything to say; it's everybody here. This is the first place that has taken me under their wing. I'm not a dunce, I don't need as much explanation of things; I've learned I can do it. It's knowing that if I fall on my face, the class is behind you. They'll pick you up and dust you off. Here they let me prove myself to them!

I'm now registered to vote. Before I didn't pay attention or talk to anyone; now I can face anybody, including my employer . . . . I know I can learn anything I want. Now I even enjoy helping others to learn in class.

We learned the skills we needed to help us supervise the local senior citizens program. We have now become involved in a community project to acquire an old school and convert it into a community center which will be self-supporting. We used to think we were too old to learn, but now we know we can be lifelong learners.

STUDENTS WHO DROP OUT OF PROGRAMS

Stopouts

Concern for the large number of students who drop out of adult education programs has long been a major issue in the field. ABE has been severely chastised for what some have described as "a dropout rate of over 50%." This contention has often been supported by attendance records. However, this evaluation indicated that such assessments of the number of students leaving the program is grossly inaccurate and the severe criticism of the holding power of ABE programs is not deserved.

The conclusion that the holding power of the Adult Basic Education program is actually much higher than it appears is based on the contention that many of the students labelled as "dropouts" are in reality only "stopouts." While it is true that they do leave the program for a time, a large percent eventually return for further study. This was the belief of the overwhelming majority of teachers, administrators, and students interviewed throughout the state.

The reasons given for "stopping out" for a time were many. Job changes and family needs were probably the most frequently mentioned. The job changes not only were in working hours or locations but also were related to the general state of the economy. The general recession of the early 1980s forced many to spend more hours working or seeking work and, consequently, less time in the classroom. Survival comes before education. In the same way, the sick child, the new infant, the move to a different home, the loss of transportation, or countless other family matters resulted in temporary withdrawal from the learning environment. Progress in class itself could lead to such withdrawal. A number of ESL teachers in particular spoke of this. Students learned to converse in English well enough to get along on the job; therefore, they left the classroom. However, as many of these teachers indicated, a year or two later the students realized the importance of the GED for advancement on the job and returned to the ABE program.

The following quotations taken from on-site interviews support the contention that the ABE dropout rate is actually much lower than has frequently be estimated. Many of these adults simply have had pressing reasons for "stopping out" for a while.

Students seldom drop out. Some starters do. During my 11 years here I've seen a number that dropped out and then returned years later. (Teacher)

We do have some who drop out but mostly it is the younger ones. Older people really stick to it; younger ones drop out but later on they come right back. (Teacher)

It is a big problem. They don't mean to drop out but something happens at home, and they just have to stay away for a while. During the past 2 years, I noticed that most who drop out do come back. (Teacher)

Twenty to thirty percent drop out. If we take time to follow-up, many come back. A lot do "stop out." They are usually the younger ones who investigate but don't want to invest the time and effort. Quite a few do stop out due to things like illness in the family. We follow-up through calls or cards. (Learning center director)

We have many that drop out of GED classes and then return in about 6 months to 1 year later. (Aide)

Our dropout rate is about 15-20%. Most drop out for personal reasons such as their family is sick. Some leave for a time and then come back. (Teacher)

Students drop out and then come back into the program. Approximately 30% of the GED students drop out. They need encouragement. Many have family problems. (Teacher)

The very young ones don't seem to stay with the program. But many of my older students tell me that they tried this before when they were younger, but dropped out--now they are back. (Teacher)

I do not feel there is a tremendous turnover. They don't just quit or drop out completely. What often happens here is job change. Some have rotating shifts. (Teacher)

I tried about 6 years ago to go to ABE, and it was all above me because there wasn't any group for someone who couldn't read real

good. (Student)

I had dropped out after completing three GED tests; now I need to finish to get job. So I'm back. (Student)

I first came in 1981, but when I had gotten to certain level at night school, I stopped. Last November I found something I couldn't read--so I came back. I have been here in this country 4 years in December. I had had some English in school in Taiwan, but that was over 20 years ago. (Student)

I dropped out for a while because of work, but I returned. (Student)

This does not mean that there are no dropouts in Adult Basic Education. Students do leave the programs without reaching their goals and do not return to that program or any other. The numbers that do this are difficult to estimate accurately because of the previously discussed tendency to stop out for a time and because of the difficulty of judging when an individual has actually made enough progress to satisfy his or her own needs or desires. However, a few generalizations regarding actual dropouts emerged from the evaluation visits.

The dropout rate varies greatly from teacher to teacher, from place to place, and from type of student to type of student. Experienced teachers who were supportive of the psychological needs of their students seemed to hold their adult learners better. Students attending comprehensive learning centers seemed to persevere in higher percentages than those in outlying classrooms. The more mature learners seemed more likely to remain until they had completed their programs than the younger adults. That this was not always true was evident from the response of an aide who was only in her second year with the ABE program and who was the sole teacher in a community some distance from any learning center. "In 1982 (my first year of teaching), I had 6 of my 15 students drop out. In 1983--I'm not sure. If I have 40 on my list, then one dropped out; but I think I have only 39 on the list. Then nobody dropped out." This was 5 months after the program started for that year!

Why do adults drop out of programs and not return? The answers of students, teachers, and administrators to this question varied considerably but seemed to group around two factors. One set of reasons seemed intrinsic to the learning activity; students were discouraged by the apparent enormity of the learning task. To speak English, to read and write decently, to pass a high school equivalency test seemed impossible tasks to them. As one student said: "They become discouraged and return to their former life style." Others seemed overwhelmed not by the learning task but by environmental factors. Women could not work, take care of the family, and at the same time go to school. Men needed to use every hour possible "to put bread on the table."

Listed below are typical statements regarding students who dropped out of the ABE program. They are typical of many such comments heard during the on-site interviews throughout the state.

Perhaps 25% drop out; usually it is because of a job, a family situation, or too much to do. New readers get discouraged--it is a very slow process; besides, most have some learning disability. Others expect to get a GED at least in 9 months. (Teacher)

They would rather work than come over to classes. They have jobs. (Student)

People drop out because they get tired. They think people are too demanding. (Student)

People drop out because of sickness, because they have a job, or because they don't have a car to get to the classes. (Student)

People drop out because of jobs, because they have to work, and because they have no time. (Student)

They are ashamed. Their friends talk about them. I'm not ashamed. (Student)

People drop out of the program because they get married, they start working, or they move to other states. (Student)

Any time one drops out it's a problem . . . . sometimes the classes are too large in ESL. If the students don't understand, they will not come back. (Supervisor)

Some don't come because of a lack of child care or because they get discouraged. Some drop out because of work schedule. (Supervisor)

I feel we have a lot of people who drop out. The reasons are: family obligations, moving away, job conflicts, personal crisis, transportation, if they get discouraged or get behind. (Supervisor)

People stop coming to the program because they have problems at home, they don't have enough time, they have families, and they have to take care of their families. (Student)

About 30% drop out of ESL. They find a job, they have nobody to take care of their children, or they have no transportation. (Teacher)

They stop coming because they can't get child care, transportation, other family problems. They have good intentions, but it takes more commitment than they could give. (Teacher)

If we can keep the student for 12 to 15 hours, the student is going to stick with it. Most of those who drop out never really get started. (Supervisor)

The main reason they drop is that they don't have the self-confidence to continue. I do not think we have many dropouts. They don't have any problem coming back if we can make them feel like they take something with them the first time. (Aide)

A lot drop out. A lot just come the first few nights--some go to other classes. Usually some personal problem causes them to drop out. Jealous husbands cause many Hispanic women to drop out. (Teacher)

Sure, some drop out. Many dropped out this year to get jobs--several moved to get jobs. The dropout problem is really related to survival needs. (Teacher)

The GED dropout rate is higher--about 35%, but that is because some complete the program. If they come everyday the first week, they usually follow through with program. (Teacher)

Reducing the Number of Dropouts

During the course of the interviews, a number of approaches used to encourage adult students to remain in the program were discussed or observed. Noteworthy among these were the special efforts made by some teachers and administrators during the first few days or weeks of an adult learner's presence in a program of study. During this period of orientation, the student is made to feel both welcome and capable of accomplishing personal goals. A friendly climate is established, and relationships among students are fostered while at the same time every effort is made to guarantee some successful progress on the part of the learner. If these first few hours in a program are productive and supportive, the adult learner is much less likely to leave.

Another technique that seems to work well in encouraging students is the follow-up call or letter when they miss a few sessions. As one student said, "The more classes you miss, the harder it is to return." Adults are going to have attendance problems; there are too many other obligations they have in life. However, they can be made to feel both welcome when they return and wanted and missed when they are not there. This feeling of being wanted can be extended in other ways apart from follow-up of absentees. Some programs, for example, seem to communicate this feeling through provision of child care or transportation services while others do it well through the atmosphere generated in the learning environment.

Listed below are a number of comments taken from interviews with ABE staff members that suggest ways of improving the retention rate.

If you're willing and ready to accept them, then they stay. They accomplish something; then their accomplishment and your encouragement of it keeps bringing them back. Dropping out depends on "need out there" and age. (Aide)

It's a long, hard struggle at 2 nights a week. It would help to be able to send materials home. You would do the student more good with consumable materials than by keeping a well-stocked vault at the learning center. (Teacher)

If there were a way to follow-up and encourage attendance, we could get a lot of people to persevere. When you're paid for just 4 hours a week, it's hard to take time to follow-up. (Part-time teacher)

If a student misses for 2 weeks, I follow up by phone, and then by letter. We find most ESL students have found employment. Many come

back in 2 years for GED classes. (Secretary)

Some never really start. They just show up a few times and leave. Others lack a babysitter, transportation, or something. Some women just cannot take all of working, taking care of children, and going to school too. (Teacher)

We get so many that just come and take a look. But if you count only those who come for a couple of weeks, maybe a third drop out. The problem with ESL people is you don't have a reachable goal. Proficiency is difficult to measure. (Teacher)

This can be minimized by a good relationship between the student and teacher. They want to be there but the pattern of their life is to stick their big toe in and then run. Maybe you can alter that, but there are many reasons for not being able to do so. (Teacher)

I have a fairly large percent in ESL the first month. The problem is that we start with a large class and you can't get around to 22 people in 2 hours. Many will come again later. (Aide)

I think they get disgusted and they need someone to encourage them and give them moral support. (Student)

I had tried to come to GED classes on my own time but found it difficult. In this program, classes are arranged so that the workers can come immediately when they get off work [1:30 p.m.]. (Student)

I personally visit people who have quit coming to the program. Sometimes this works; sometimes it doesn't. (Supervisor)

The more efficient that the GED program becomes, the more high school kids may begin to look at the ABE program as an alternative to dropping out of school. We need to begin to have concentrated co-operation between high school counselors to keep kids in schools in some manner. The new proposals that make schools stricter will result in more high school dropouts. This will mean more funding needs for adult education. (Advisory board member)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

One of the major concerns talked about by teachers and supervisors during the evaluation interviews was that of staff development. Both pre-service and ongoing training is a vital concern to many adult educators across the state. A curious paradox appeared among these concerns: the greater the competency and training of the individual, the more likely that person was to voice concern for continued professional training. As one of the interviewers noted after an on-site visit: "Teacher training seemed to be one of the most recognized needs of all of the staff members; yet this co-op seems to be doing much more staff development than most."

This segment of the report first will review some of the present practices in the field. It then will go on to discuss needs for training as reported during the interviews. The final section will synopsize some of the suggestions offered by interviewees regarding methods of training.

Present Staff Development Practices

State regulations require 12 hours of in-service training for all ABE staff members each year. Except for instructional staff hired after the annual start-up of the program year and except for a few isolated instances, the on-site visits discovered no mass violation of this regulation. Most co-ops offered 6 to 12 hours of training in late summer or early fall and again in spring. Many offered much additional opportunity for training.

Although the traditional approach of gathering together all staff members in the co-op for a general workshop (usually on a Saturday) is still used in many locations, a variety of individualized or small group approaches are being relied on by many program directors for practical on-going training. Below are concise descriptions of various approaches presently being used.

> We hold 3 days of training in August each year that seems to work quite well according to feedback from those who have attended. The problem with this is that not all teachers are hired by then--especially those who will be teaching in outlying areas. So we try to juggle the schedule to fit everyone. We used to have "sharing suppers" where the teachers got together and discussed the problems that emerged. (I figured a teacher could often help another teacher better than I could.) Now we have weekly staff meetings at the learning center both for the day staff and the night people. Many of the part time teachers also attend. (Co-op director)

> A committee of the full-time staff people determine what we do for staff development. We have tried to get input from outlying programs too. One of the problems is that consultants are hard to get because we can not pay them enough. Good people won't come on Saturday for $10.00 an hour or $100.00 for a whole day. (Co-op director)

> The learning center closes at noon on Friday and from then until 4:00, we have staff development time. We discuss problems and successes. That way everyone stays familiar with the students and the materials. (Learning center director)

> We have a general workshop in the fall, usually 6 to 8 hours. We address the topics which seem to be most troublesome. This includes orientation and providing a locally-developed handbook. (Supervisor)

> Teachers do 12 hours of in-service with the co-op. At least half of them go to other workshops. (Supervisor)

> The in-service our co-op provides and the conferences we get to go to are helpful. What I would really like is a degree in adult education. I would love to see courses geared to teaching adults. [She did not know that any university in Texas offered such courses.] (Aide)

> We have an 8-hour meeting each September for all in the co-op plus a second day-long meeting in spring. We use consultants and learning center directors to conduct the training. Newly-hired individuals are trained through use of modules or locally-developed handouts. Their supervisor must certify they have done 6 hours of training. (Co-op director)

Training Needs of Teachers

The teachers mentioned many different areas

in which they needed training, but there were three areas that were mentioned much more frequently than any others. These were training in (a) the psychology of adults, (b) methods of teaching adults, and (c) interpersonal relations. When they spoke of training in the psychology of adults, they often meant more than solely the psychology of adult learning. Many felt they needed to understand their students better as people--what motivated them, why they reacted to problems in the manner many of them did, and how to help them develop problem solving skills. They said that the shock of moving from teaching children to working with adults could be disturbing without some good training in understanding adult students. This related to methods of teaching also. Some recognized they needed to use methods that were more individualized and more involving, and they wanted training in these methods. Some seemed stunned by the great reliance on workbooks and wanted to know how to use them effectively. But over and over again, they spoke of the adult education program as a human enterprise and of the need for all involved to develop their skills in communicating, accepting, and relating to people.

Representative comments of the instruction staff are given below. These speak to the needs they recognized for instruction in content and process skills essential to teaching adults. The methodology for delivering this will be discussed in the next section.

> It [the process of teaching adults] was intimidating to any new teachers when they first came in since there was no training. They couldn't last; they couldn't make it on their own. (Supervisor)

> The turnover rate is large among teachers because we are not adequately trained. Workshops need to teach teachers how adults learn and not try to sell one method to everybody. (Teacher)

> Training needs include: how to teach self-esteem how to develop self-worth in students; how to relax in front of adult students; how to give examples of work to students; how to demonstrate what you teach. (Teacher)

> Teachers need experience in teaching--a "student-teaching" experience during pre-service. They also need to know how to keep up in current events and new changes in teaching. Have sessions that deal with real-life problems and experiences in the teaching-learning process. (Teacher)

> Training needs of teachers are psychology, adult learning, patience, and how to approach the learner as an adult. (Teacher)

> Teachers need training in psychology and how to be supportive of students in the classroom. (Teacher)

> Teachers should be trained in the characteristics of adults, how the program is operated, and how to handle students with "kid gloves." College courses in adult education should be made more available, if possible. (Teacher)

> Teachers need training in how to organize classes and how to evaluate materials properly. (Teacher)

> Teachers should be trained in how to make decisions and in public speaking skills. They need to learn to say I don't know when they really don't. (Teacher)

> Teachers need to learn how to treat their students as adults, not as children. They need to have good personalities. Teachers need to learn to be real, not act like they are on a pedestal. Teachers need more consumer education so they can help students. (Teacher)

> Teachers need to learn how to teach adults differently than they teach children. Teachers need much patience. They need to be flexible. (Teacher)

> Teaches need training in learning disabilities and in reading. Teachers need help in fitting their teaching styles to the students. (Teacher)

> Teachers depend on materials too much. They need to learn to teach better. (Teacher)

> Teachers need help in knowing what methods to use to teach material to students, especially which method to use for different areas. (Aide)

> When teaching a language it is important for the teacher to have some methodology background. It is also important for teachers to have training in adult education. Teachers need help

in developing classroom structure. (Teacher)

Teachers need training on adult learning styles. They need help on how to teach adults differently than they teach children. Teachers should be trained using adult methods so they can see them in use. (Teacher)

Teachers need help learning to reach students who are illiterate. They need to be taught not to put students down. Teachers need training in using adult methodologies and ways to teach adult learners. (Teacher)

Teachers of adults need a background in adult education. They must constantly motivate. Children have little problems, but adults have big problems. Teachers must understand this. Teacher training should not be conducted in one-day in-services. Teachers need to observe and spend time seeing what teaching is all about. The psychology is different for teaching adults and kids. (Teacher)

Teachers need training in realizing that their students are adults and how to teach them and help them to learn together. (Teacher)

Training should be future focused on how to help people and how do we work with them now that they are here. We need skills in how to help people address their present problems. I like the idea of two-track training workshops; one track for theory and the other focusing on practice. (Teacher)

We need instruction in how to motivate students and in characteristics of adults (especially the good qualities--too often we look at the bad). We need some training in needs of special education. We need to know ways to teach them how to read. How to start with people who have absolutely no reading skills? We should get together a group of teachers who teach in same areas and let them exchange ideas. Workshop sessions also are helpful because it is important to learn what is happening at other places. But firsthand stuff is also important. (Teacher)

Too many workshop activities are geared to part-time teacher and self-contained classroom situation. (Teacher)

It is not the content! People know their content. We need to know how to teach adults. (Teacher)

Personality! Can they accept differences in people (religion, moral values, race, and life style)? We must be able to avoid putting a wall between ourselves and students. We must sincerely care and have patience. We must be able to explain something five or six times--maybe we need to go back to school and enroll in something that we know nothing and see what it's like to have something explained for the first time. (Teacher)

New teachers should visit some actual classroom; observation should be required before teachers enter a classroom for first time. (Teacher)

We need materials and instructions in how to use them effectively. (Teacher)

If you are going to include the learning disabled in your program, teachers need to be trained to work with them. How to deal with the totally illiterate native American is my biggest problem. (Teacher)

Training Needs of Administrators

As the evaluation staff was told frequently, the training needs of administrators differ greatly from those of the instructors. A number of mid-level administrators lamented the fact that most workshops were put on exclusively for the teaching staff. Some co-ops do attempt to provide the training needed by these mid-management personnel, but the part-time status and vastly different job assignments of so many of them make formal training difficult to arrange. Supervisors, for example, spoke of needs as different as how to interview and select prospective teachers and how to evaluate materials. Learning center directors spoke of insight needed in staff development, of a broad range of management skills needed, and especially of training in interpersonal skills.

The training needs recognized by co-op directors for people in their positions varied according to their understanding of their own roles. Most frequently mentioned were needs for planning and staff development skills. Some, however, were quite specific about needs to understand state regulations and procedures better, to be able to train their staffs in the use of computers, or to develop skills

needed to build cooperative programs with industry.

A few comments by administrators are offered below. Many of their training needs are mentioned elsewhere in this document.

> I feel the supervisors need more sessions on such topic as management styles, personnel problems, and other administrative type things. I have provided staff development activities even for other co-ops but never have been trained to do anything like that. (Supervisor)

> I already know for next August that I've got to have hands-on computer training for myself and my staff. I've got to find someone who can come out here and talk to my teachers in simple terms . . . . I also need to be able to work one to one with teachers throughout the year on any problem areas. (Learning center director)

> I see a real need for training in "people skills"--interpersonal relations--and in management. (Supervisor)

> How much in-service do supervisors and administrators really get? Some good topics for summer institutes would be classroom leadership skills. (Special Project Director)

> The universities such as Texas A&M should provide summer training for the co-op directors. They need training in staff development, management techniques, and selection of materials. (Historical figure)

> I feel supervisors should be trained to design and implement workshops and to provide in-service for those who cannot attend workshops. University professors were probably relied on too heavily at one time for staff development; they sometimes missed the mark. I wonder if we could not develop computer simulations for staff training. (Supervisor)

Methods of Providing Training for Teachers

According to the teachers and administrators interviewed, the traditional co-op wide workshop is not the best way of providing staff development. The major complaints about such workshops were that they were not designed to meet the real needs of teachers and that they tended to mix together new and experienced teachers, learning center personnel and traditional classroom teachers, clerical and administrative staff and all of these have vastly different needs. Some value was seen in such workshops such as the possibility of seeing what teachers from other areas were doing in their classrooms or of being trained by professional staff development specialists in adult education. However, the general impression given both by teachers and administrators was that they found special type sessions more valuable than general workshops.

Perhaps the most frequently praised approach to teacher training was the visit to the classroom or learning center station of other competent, experienced teachers. Many suggested that this should be an absolute requirement for all new teachers. Some suggested it could be simulated in small group gatherings of teachers with similar experience levels and teaching duties. A second frequently mentioned approach was that of gathering together those with special teaching tasks or needs such as those working with special populations or special methodologies. One-on-one approaches to training also seemed to be growing in frequency as an effective approach to training in some areas. In addition, a considerable number of those interviewed were taking formal courses in education. Some spoke of the desire for formal adult education training, but none was available in their area.

A desire of the instructional personnel that struck the interviewing team was a repeated request for a two-track approach to training. They felt that the theory sessions should be conducted by university personnel or by knowledgeable consultants. The practical sessions should be organized and conducted by other teachers. While the theory sessions would provide on-going professional development in the overall field of adult education, the teacher sessions would offer opportunities for sharing ideas and materials that are related to the daily classroom operation. By this teachers meant that they wanted training both in theory and practice.

Selected suggestions of ABE staff members regarding how training should be offered are synopsized below. Teachers and supervisors not only had many suggestions such as these but also seemed to be looking for means to implement them.

> Teacher training should not be conducted in

one-day in-services. Teachers need to observe and spend time seeing what teaching is all about. The psychology is different for teaching adults and kids. (Teacher)

Classroom teachers seem to fit a different mold; "real" adult education teachers squirm and twist in classroom situations. Everyone here works first as a volunteer to see if they fit in. All the staff needs to know that they are important part of the whole process . . . . The co-op in-service does not meet the diverse needs of the full-time learning center people and the part-time teachers together. (Learning center director)

The formal presentations make you aware of things; the informal discussions help you apply what you have become aware of. (Learning center director)

Twelve hours is not enough. Offer scholarships for 3 hours credit courses--the cost would be less than $2.00 an hour. Set up fall start up days for teachers like ISD's do. (Project director)

We had a good background [Masters in Bilingual Education at UTSA] but could use training in teaching reading and science. In GED I feel totally incompetent. Not many schools have classes in adult education. UTSA has one class in it. (Teacher)

I like to go to workshops where we really learn something. Often it is the same thing over and over. We need more competent presenters. (Aide)

The new teacher needs to know what is available, what is helpful. The experienced teacher needs help in specific areas; for example, most need help with methods of teaching reading. (Teacher)

There should be graduate and post-graduate programs in adult education. Also more workshops. We need minimum criteria for teachers--some kind of a certification program. (Teacher)

Teachers need more workshops. They need practice acting out classroom problems and role-playing. (Teacher)

Teachers need to be able to handle a variety of situations. They need more in-service workshops and need to observe other adult classes. (Teacher)

Teachers can learn some in workshops, but they also need to learn by watching good teachers and working alongside them. (Teacher)

The teachers need to have good role-models; they need to practice teaching adults alongside other good teachers. Workshops can be good, but I wonder if they just do it to provide the hours required. (Teacher)

We need more training like they used to have where we went every day for 2 weeks. (Aide)

I would like to visit other centers to learn from them, to get ideas, and to see how they do things. When we have a workshop, we exchange ideas, but that is different. (Teacher)

Teachers need professional courses, especially how to teach in the GED program. They need to learn how to work with older adults and how to keep the younger students interested. They need to see other teachers in action, to visit good GED classrooms. (Teacher)

We need to know where to go for courses; we need a schedule of major workshops like state association meetings which teachers can attend (i.e., not during the week) . . . . I like the idea of two tracks--one for theory and one utilizing practitioners. (Teacher)

I get a lot from speakers at workshops but learn as much from others. Sharing sessions with peers would be good. (Teacher)

We need to: have in-service; have teachers get involved with state association; have people who do workshops look at what they do. Teachers need a commitment to continuing education. I would like to see A&M go on site for the purpose of conducting some informal activities to update us. You could tell us what's going on through informal presentations. This would create the feeling that we could just call A&M up for advice. (Teacher)

One of the best activities I experienced was the 5 days in Galveston at the Institute [conducted by Conti and Fellenz]. It was good because it was small. We met people; had a chance to interact and ask some real honest, tough,

probing questions. You guys from A&M were not only talking but also listening. We got to meet other educators and got to know their gut feelings, ideas, and trends. (Teacher)

We should consider interactive video for teacher training. The video disk is still too expensive, but there is much we could do with video and audio that is available now. It has to be interactive to be effective. (Project director)

If the teacher is very weak in skills . . . then it becomes my responsibility to train them to the best of my ability. By training, I can sit down one to one. I always try to tell them what their resources are--audiovisuals, videos, printed materials. (Supervisor)

I feel one of the best ways to train new teachers is to have them sit in classrooms and observe--this is the way I learned. (Teacher)

A lot of times I use one of my top teachers. They go in and observe the teacher and help them possibly plan their lessons or when they turn in their lesson plans to me . . . I go through and see what they are doing. (Supervisor)

One of the most successful methods of doing staff development is to observe other teachers. The regional workshops are good; they provide an opportunity to get away from home and to exchange ideas with other adult educators. (Supervisor)

I feel that doing our own staff development works best because we can gear it to the needs of the teachers. The teacher in the learning center has completely different needs than the ESL teacher, for example. (Supervisor)

I've never failed to learn from a workshop. I think they're vital . . . But I think it's as much the association with other adult educators as anything I've learned at a workshop [session]. (Aide)

I attended a session in Galveston on the effects of cultural differences which I felt was very beneficial and would recommend it. (Aide)

Find out from teachers what they need and then get them involved in planning workshops. (Co-op director)

We need some individualized in-service; regional meetings are too much of the same old thing. Maybe we should have experienced teachers do more workshop sessions. We could use the [Texas A&M] modules more because of turnover such material is new for many. We need to appeal to a variety of learning styles, also. We need some structure to assure teacher sharing at sessions, and it needs to be well planned. Some meaningful follow-up from training sessions is needed. New teachers should follow master teachers around for a while--[supervisors could consider using this in hiring practices]. My feeling is that not much thought is put into planning local workshops, and the quick evaluations at end of workshops are not much good. Administrators need to do better needs assessments and involve teachers in local staff development advisory boards. (Project director)

Teachers need more say in materials selection; too much of the good-old-boy system is used. Teachers are the ones who use materials so they should have influence in the selection. But we need a conference only for teachers to expose teachers to philosophy of education and ways to access student needs. We need to expose them to good materials and aid them in how to use and develop materials. (Publisher)

Topics should be perceived as needs--not imposed from above. TEA needs to take leadership in this, perhaps by demanding a needs assessment before funding a training activity. (Project director)

Full-time, experienced people need an entirely different program than new or part-time people. Quality control of in-service also needs improvement. I recommend "roving experts" [professors hired just for staff development]. They could be housed at A&I, NTSU, El Paso, and A&M so they could have a university base and supervision. If funded through TEA for $40-45,000 each, they could be the roving band of professional mentors that we need so desperately. (Project director)

A DECADE OF STATE FUNDING AS VIEWED BY HISTORICAL FIGURES

The state of Texas indicated the determination of its citizens to make a serious effort to eliminate or significantly reduce illiteracy in the state by appropriating state funds for the support of adult basic education programs. This effort began in 1974 with the passage of House Bill 147 and has continued to the present time. Through this decade, the state's efforts have grown considerably as is evidenced by the growing amount of state funds appropriated for this purpose. During the 1974-75 biennium the appropriation totalled $2,150,000 annually. By 1983, it had increased to $7,275,000.

In order to include in this evaluation a feeling of the impact on ABE programing of this decade of state funding, 13 individuals who have long served the basic education effort in Texas were specially interviewed. These 13 (designated as "historical figures") were questioned about their perceptions of change in adult basic education during the past decade. The feeling they gave for the ongoing evolution of ABE in Texas is presented below.

Background of the Historical Figures

It was interesting and indicative of the status of ABE programs a decade or more ago to note the backgrounds and manner of recruitment of these historical figures. Five were school teachers, and two were school administrators when they made their moves into ABE. They did so for reasons that varied from family geographical moves to requests by district supervisors to work with adults. One spoke of how in the 1960's he volunteered to teach parents "new math" because nobody else could be found to do it. He discovered he liked teaching adults and the parents enjoyed learning. When he was asked to teach ABE/GED part-time, he seized the opportunity. Eventually he became a co-op director.

The other six historical figures moved into adult education from positions other than those of public school teacher or administrator. One had been working for the Neighborhood Youth Corps when he was asked to become director of a 13 county ABE program. Another ran a migrant program while a third had worked for a Skills Center. Others made the move into adult education from volunteer or part-time positions. For example, one man began teaching part-time in the evening high school and after 6 years became director of adult and vocational education, a newly-created position.

Today these men and women identify themselves as "adult educators." Two still spend much of their time in direct teaching or supervision of the instructional program. Three act as field consultants for the Texas Education Agency while the other eight are co-op directors.

Impact of State Funding on Adult Basic Education

"What a difference it has made--House Bill 147!" was the reaction of one co-op director when queried about the impact of state funding on adult basic education programs. In general, the historical figures interviewed were quite in agreement regarding the effect of these funds. Most described the expansion of programming especially in adult secondary education and in functional or competency-based training as a major result. Prior to 1974, funding for the GED had been limited to a small percentage of the available money. Support for high school diploma programs or competency approaches to functional literacy was almost non-existant. Moreover, the additional state funding made it possible to hire full time personnel and to keep select programs open all year long. This not only gave staff the security of permanent employment but motivated them to engage in staff development activities. State funding also led to the development of the co-op system throughout the state. This has proven to be an excellent management system that has stretched financial resources far beyond what might have been anticipated. It also enabled administrators to comprehensive and long term approaches to literacy education. A final point mentioned by several of the interviewees related to increased problem solving potential. The state funds made it possible to set up demonstration and special projects, to involve universities and other agencies, and to attack some of the special problems of building a comprehensive and effective program of adult basic education throughout Texas.

The enthusiastic support for state funding is reflected in selected statements quoted below.

State funds have changed ABE/GED tremendously. There was previously no way to get a high school education by using federal funds. Moreover, this supplementary funding was needed for acquiring full-time personnel, for providing more funds for staff development, for special projects, for improving the quality of instruction, and on and on.

They provided increased flexibility for program funding. This included GED programs, preparation of teachers, and in-service training. Second, the quality of programs increased because full-time positions could be created. Third, this provided the funding needed for the state to identify and solve problems which existed.

State funds enabled adult education to go to a year-round program. This, in turn, provided more security for personnel in ABE and reduced the turnover rate in the program through continuing contracts. Therefore, the program now has more continuity, better quality, and is a more attractive place to work for good teachers and other staff.

Because of state funds, we were able to expand our programs and serve more students. Since we did not have to worry so much about funds, we were able to organize the co-op system for administration. That was a great move for administering our program statewide. We were also able to reorganize locally by adding full-time positions and indicating that we could provide some future security for our employees. We could also increase our GED program and take it out of the closet.

State funds saved adult education in Texas. They provided flexibility and enabled the program to increase in size, when needed. In addition, the funds enabled the local program to initiate a follow-up activity of contacting all students within 90 days after leaving the program. These data indicated that over a 5-year period at minimum rates ABE/GED has contributed $27,000,000 to the economy of Lubbock.

Changes During the Decade of State Funding

In the early 1970s there were more than a few people in our nation that felt that illiteracy could be eliminated in a short time. A determined effort supported by federal and state funds would wipe out this blight in our society, and we would be able to turn to other pressing problems. The problems of adult basic education, however, have proven to be much too complicated to eliminate in a single decade. In fact, the combination of those who have left our schools as functional illiterates and those who have entered our country without adequate skills have made the problem of illiteracy at least as pressing today as it was 10 years ago.

Significant changes have occurred, though, during the past decade. Many individuals have benefited from the adult basic education program. Our society is better off today because many adults were given a second chance and as a result have become better and more productive members of our world. The following sections of this report will look at some of the changes that the historical figures discussed during their interviews.

Changes in Students

There was general agreement among those interviewed that adult basic education students are getting younger. The school dropouts of today apparently are finding it more difficult to find employment without a certificate of high school competency. For some, this younger, less mature student means problems. They seem less patient and more difficult to control. Others, however, described them as more serious and harder workers. Also agreed upon by all was that ESL programs have grow significantly. Apparently some of this is due to the increase of immigrants and visitors to our land from many different countries. Certainly here in Texas major efforts are still being directed to the Spanish dominant adult.

The present state of the economy was also frequently mentioned in relation to the students coming to adult basic education programs today. As unemployment increased, the less educated have found it more and more difficult to find or maintain employment. For some of them ABE appears to be one means of keeping their jobs or to be essential to preparing themselves for one.

Listed below are a number of quotations taken from the interviews of the historical figures. They describe their perceptions of how students have changed during the past decade.

It is obvious that they are getting younger.

There are also more secondary students. The hard-to-reach are not being reached. It has to be done through volunteers; we cannot do it with state or federal funds.

Students definitely have changed over the years. They are now more serious about this "last chance," especially the past 4 or 5 years. The economy has affected the students we are getting.

Today our classes are so crowded, we have people on waiting lists. People who have worked for years are now unemployed and realize they should have finished their education. There are over 2,000 on waiting lists in our city alone. Those who finished what we had to offer have gone on to do their thing; those who did not finish are still there and still frustrated. The perennial needs of students are still there. They need to be educated; not just taught another language or to read, that's not education. So we have a double task, and the important one is to educate the people.

At first we only got into CBHSD program those who were close to diplomas and wanted a feeling of accomplishment. Now every type of student comes. The recession is bringing us more students.

They are younger, are at all levels of ability, and more interested in learning. They are in a hurry to reach their goals.

Students in the past 10 years have become brighter and more able to pass the CBHSD program. They are also younger. In 1974, the average age was 28-30 whereas in 1984 the average age is 21-22 in this particular program. And they are more enthusiastic and more highly motivated.

Students are now coming into the program at lower levels of instruction. They have much further to go to complete the GED. They have a lower self-concept and a lower sense of achievement potential. There are more immigrants. However, we are definitely doing our job in reaching these students.

We now have 44 nationalities in our enrollment which equals a large ESL program. In 1972, the average age of students was 34.5 years. Now, it is 23.5 years. They want a "quick fix" to pass the GED, and discipline problems are beginning to be a problem. More and more recent dropouts are coming into the program, and this is drastically changing the nature of our enrollment.

Changes in Teachers

The teachers in the adult basic education programs of Texas today are more experienced and better trained than those of 10 years ago. This should not be surprising for a number of them are the same people who began teaching in ABE when state funds first spread the program through their area. In addition a very important force in present programs is a considerable group of former ABE/GED or ESL students who have gone on to become teachers or aides in the programs in which they once participated. Because of their own experiences, many of them do particularly well in relating to the frightened or confused entering student in today's classrooms or centers. Still another factor that has added to the experience of present ABE teachers is the training provided through universities and special projects. In 1973 there were less than a dozen individuals in Texas with degrees in Adult Education; today there are more than 100. However, for ABE personnel it was as much the workshops and special training sessions that university personnel directed as the formal courses that impacted training and affected classroom practice. The special projects and demonstration programs conducted by various groups in the state must also be acknowledged as contributing greatly to the training and expertize of the ABE instructional staff.

Another very important change in teachers has been the increased number of those employed full-time in ABE. Several of the interviewees pointed to this as one of the major benefits of state funding. In spite of a recent trend in the opposite direction (due to tightening of funding) as reported in other sections of this report, the full-time ABE staff member has become the mainstay of many programs. This "full-time" instructor may actually be employed only 15 to 20 hours a week, but teaching in adult education is their major job occupation. They are dedicated to adult basic education.

Some of the insights into changes in teachers during the decade as offered by the historical figures are presented below. A fuller

description of the characteristics of today's adult education teachers is offered earlier in this report.

> We are seeing more full-time teachers, and that is a plus. There is still a large turnover because of the pay scale and state requirement for seven in ADA. More secondary teachers are coming into the program.
>
> Ten years ago a quarter of the teachers were non-degreed. Now all are degreed. There are also more full-time teachers, and they seem more satisfied and proud of the program.
>
> They are still challenged and still most interested in how to teach better, in how to help their students reach that goal of speaking English, of getting that diploma. In materials and methods we have not really changed.
>
> Due to colleges and in-service, the whole idea of teaching adults has changed. We have a lot more adult materials; we treat people more like adults.
>
> Their dedication is stronger and they are able to serve a wider range of students, including illiterates. They have more preparation in adult education than in past.
>
> We have more special education-trained teachers teaching adults, and that is good. They are more sensitive and willing to change when needed. Also, we are fortunate to be able to employ more teachers who are not teaching public school in the daytime. Thus, the teachers have more energy and more time for class preparation. Also, there are trends for teachers to want full-time employment in adult education. We also are able to hire our "own," e.g., aides who came through our GED program and full-time employees who came from our part-time staff.
>
> For the first time, we now have a "waiting list" of teachers. They have several sessions of pre-service training and serve as substitutes in the program before being hired as teachers. They seem hyperactive and very anxious to get into the classroom with adults.

Changes in Administrators

In 1973 a few programs in Texas had begun to experiment with cooperative type approaches to organizing and managing educational programs for adults. With the advent of state funding such cooperatives became much more feasible, and the whole state was organized according to the co-op system. This was a tremendous boon to adult education for it enabled the co-ops to hire full-time directors to build comprehensive programs throughout their districts. Because the system was new, these first co-op directors were intimately involved in its development, and they learned their jobs as they developed. The historical figures understandably saw the directors of today as more experienced and as "coming out of the ranks." They also described them as being more representative, that is, including women and minority representatives.

Some uneasiness was also evident in descriptions of today's administrators. Programs were not seen as developing and growing today as they did years ago. Some would say that this is due to funding limitations, but a few spoke of a new spirit that was needed.

The words of the interviewees are presented below to preserve their own insights into changes in administrators over the past decade.

> Many of the administrators have matured in their jobs. They are now better at planning and at monetary matters. All directors are full-time in our area except one.
>
> The changes are not many. There is more interest to do a better job; the better goal doesn't seem that clear though. To stimulate change one must have some type of future goal. We just have jobs like teaching ESL or GED to people.
>
> Administrators better represent the total population now, i.e., younger, some females, full-time, more selected on adult education ability than in the past. They are more active and interested in program improvement.
>
> Administrators have become much better in last 10 years. They are more experienced (coming out of the ranks), more concerned, more knowledgeable, younger, and human relations-oriented. Now, more people are interested in doing a good job, and as a result, the competition is creating better programs all across the state.

We have some administrators coming from our own ranks, but not enough. Too many still have not been trained in adult education and know little, if anything, about teaching adults. However, they all in general appear to be more dedicated than 10 years ago.

Administrators are becoming more complacent; they are letting things happen and reacting rather than displaying the leadership that they used to show.

Our role as regional representatives has changed quite a bit. We used to have a lot of input into programming. Now we don't have any role even in annual plans. We do have a chance to review the state plan.

Other Significant Changes

If one were to summarize the comments of the historical figures regarding significant changes they recognized in the program during the past 10 years, it would have to be in terms of general program improvement. Rather than that, the words of the knowledgeable individuals are presented below.

The important changes I see are: (a) The trend of ESL students coming into ABE programs in ever-increasing numbers. (b) The growth of GED program. (c) The development of "waiting lists" of students to get into our programs.

One of the biggest things that has happened is the involvement of the universities in programming and training. For example, the APL life skills curriculum could give us a state-wide curriculum that would help us become accountable. Also, in the last 2 years, we have had our part-time teachers trained around units or modules dealing with life skills. They must read and study and expand on these areas that they are going to teach in our program.

The most significant change is the diploma programs that are available for adults--all there was before was the GED. There is also more awareness of adult education--all the way from colleges to local newspapers.

Significant changes are: (a) HB 247; (b) Adult learning centers; (c) The APL Study; (d) CBHSD; (e) Awareness of senior citizens, special populations; (f) Integrated adult education programs - GED, H.S. diploma, and everything else.

APL and CBHSD were 2 of the biggest changes during the past 10 years. In addition, we have drastically improved our staff development programs, and as a result, the entire program has benefited through improved teaching/learning activities.

We now have more resources which have improved teacher training. And the co-op system has improved the quality of our state program immensely.

(a) The co-op system made administration easier, more efficient and more acceptable. (b) Full-time employment for many people makes adult education a more viable profession. (c) Special projects which enable us to try new things. (d) Advisory councils.

Texas, ABE, and the Future

The past decade has seen a tremendous growth in adult basic education programs in Texas. Will that growth continue during the next decade? Some are sure it will; others say: "No, not unless ABE supporters become more politically active in support of the program." Such diversity in responses typified the optimistic and pessimistic outlooks on the future. As can be seen from the responses given below, the majority see more hope than gloom in the future. The major fears seem to be that the ABE program will disappear as a separately funding federal program or that the co-op system will be weakened to the point of loss of flexibility and effectiveness. Many also see much larger numbers of young people leaving the public school system and turning to adult basic education for academic and vocational training.

"The system is in place and we know what we have to do." This feeling was repeated several times during the interviews, and it expresses the hopes for the future. If we can do our job, if we can keep on improving, and if we can rekindle the spirit of growing and developing and creating new approaches, the future of ABE in Texas is indeed great.

Below the historical figures express their own words and thoughts on the future of ABE.

We will see the attitude of teachers changing

from a dispenser of knowledge to a facilitator and resource person . . . . We will continue to use technology at a higher rate and our staff will learn to become people-technology oriented. We will begin to use technology to teach in remote areas of our state, particularly for small classes and programs . . . . Cooperation of community agencies and business in networking education will increase.

With the state raising requirements for high school graduation, there will be more dropouts and a growth in numbers for adult basic education. There is no doubt that there will be state and federal funds for basic education of adults.

The ABE program has tremendous potential to develop into an even better program. However, we do not have the lobby that others have . . . . Adult education could be integrated more with the regular K through 12 school program.

We are going to have to be more accountable. The structure is there now, but until we can all sit down and decide exactly what it is we want to do, we can't really ask for more. Let's decide and get on with it rather than just doing programs.

If we are doing our job, we should be able to raise the literacy level across the U.S. We ought to be to reach the needful; we ought to be able to give them what they want; we ought to be able to encourage them to want more.

I think there will be a demand for a higher level of education. We should be the source for meeting that demand.

Some of the things I see happening in the future are: (a) There will be more emphasis on business education; (b) we will put more emphasis upon test-taking as a skill; (c) there will be more requirements for computer-literacy training.

The greatest impact on the future of ABE will be literacy councils. They will enable ABE to link with other groups, including business, and enlarge our programs through many linkages.

In the future: (a) There will be more likelihood of charging fees for certain students. (b) The co-op system as we know it now will be dismantled and changed. (c) Waiting lists of potential students will grow.

The most immediate change appears to be the possible decline of the co-op systems. Schools may be pulling out and demanding their own administrative unit. The APL concept will be expanded. We will assume more responsibility for 16- to 17-year-olds in Texas as the school systems begin to fail even more.

One significant change will be the change in the funding formula, i.e., reduction in ratio, problems created for smaller co-ops, etc. This will also create changes in class size, contact hour requirements, and in general, lead to a lower quality program. Another change will be the increased emphasis on regional conferences. These may replace the state conference because of accessibility of teachers, both full-time and part-time.

We will see either a better system for lobbying for what we need or we will see the demise of ABE/GED as we know it . . . . The federal government will demand more services for urban areas and fewer for rural areas . . . . Some kind of standards for professional preparation of adult educators in Texas will occur. This should occur for administrators and then for teachers.

Because of the transition of the population, we will have a much higher percentage of ESL students who will be bright, active, and impatient to learn English. There will be a higher rate of school dropouts and therefore, greater demand for adult education . . . . If the GED test gets any easier and if schools continue to be easy, the value of an education may become less--perhaps not valued at all.

I think we are going to see a number of changes, such as: (a) There will be more emphasis on ABE because of the public schools will not be able to retain their students. (b) Business and industry requirements will demand higher levels of education for job entry levels. (c) More emphasis will be given to computer instruction. (d) There will be more instruction by television and other forms of media. (e) We will be forced to improve our image by improved public relations efforts. Our use of media must improve especially qualitatively in order for us to grow. (f) We will shed our image of a "give-away" program by beginning

to charge fees to some extent. (g) We will improve our staff development practices and require better standards for our personnel.

The need is there and the system is in place. The only question is can the people involved keep alive the spirit they need to really help adults have a second chance at life.

PLEAS FOR HELP

During many of the interviews, individuals would pause and say: "If we could only get help with this . . . . " Many of those pleas have been integrated in other parts of this document; however, some have such overriding application that they have been collected under this separate section. While the dominant appeal was for more funding, there were frequent suggestions of ways in which present or future resources could be made more effective. These requests for help have been grouped into the following six areas: help needed from TEA, needs for additional funding, staffing and training needs, teaching needs, vocational training needs, and the need for a renewed spirit. Each of these will be treated separately below.

Help Needed from TEA

The type of help needed from the Texas Education Agency usually revolved around the dissemination of funds or the implementation of state regulations. However, there was also a definite tendency for people throughout the state to assign those needs that could be met only through area- or state-wide coordination at the door of TEA. Selected experts from the interviews are given below to allow program personnel to speak for themselves on such needs.

> Now that we're competing for dollars, the reporting of student contact hours must be the same in different localities. Is a TV hour or a Nursing Home hour the same as a learning center hour? The ease of "modifying" reports is also a concern. Suggestions I have are for monthly reports, audits, spot checks of a co-op's records. These things would help eliminate clerical errors. (Co-op director)

> I think there is money set aside for too many types of adult education programs both on the state and national level. One program (and I think it should be ABE) should be funded for all literacy and basic programs. As someone has said before: "Give us half the total money and we'll double the output." (Co-op director)

> Teachers need paid planning periods, especially those of us who are hourly paid. Since there are no vacation or health care benefits, programs loose those teachers who need that security. (Teacher)

> The timing of funding makes good planning difficult. We try to set our priorities in January, but TEA makes us wait to May. We just go on and make our plans and set priorities. Without help of other directors, we'd be lost. (Co-op director)

> Our plea is that you put a little more flexibility within the system. An example is the number needed to maintain a class. Why not make it an average needed for classes within a co-op or an area. (College President)

> We need strong leadership from the state level. People there need to be more visible, knowledgeable of rules, and more accessible. Let's have some clearer decisions so some local activities can be planned. (Co-op director)

> We need state-wide coordination so teachers do not have to keep re-inventing the wheel. What teachers are accomplishing now is a miracle considering the little funding and coordination. (Teacher)

> We could spend more, but budget amendments are so complicated and it takes TEA so long to react. We need to have extra money available sooner; we need at least 5 months to work with it effectively. (Co-op director)

> In the system we're in you can't negotiate. Funding should be determined by money available, past performance, and need. (Co-op director)

> Stronger Area Consultants would help. They would have to be knowledgeable in adult education plus have special personal attributes. These would include being enthusiastic, energetic, and COMMITTED. They can't be political. What we need is contagious enthusiasm and experience. (Co-op director)

> We need state or federal money for vocational skill training. Since direct funding for this has been taken away, we can not have a comprehensive delivery of services that the state plan calls for. (Co-op director)

Funding Needs

The need for additional funding seemed evident throughout the state. Personnel at all levels voiced concern that the program could not meet the needs of those for whom it was intended unless present funding levels could be increased. Teachers, aides, and students frequently voiced this need in pleas for more time or staff. Directors spoke of these and broader needs as evidenced by the comments given below.

> The greatest need is for more funds to increase the size of our programs. These might enable us to meet some of the needs of our large target population. (Historical figure)

> They should do more at the state level to get other agencies to flow their money through adult education. It makes us look bad at the local level when other agencies come to us for services, but we don't have the funds to set up additional classes. (Co-op director)

> From the financial perspective, we need advance funding for July and August and full funding for the annual budget. (Long-time administrator)

> One major problem is that programs that don't spend money do not de-obligate it quickly enough. In our funding formula, the agency should put more emphasis on past performance. (Co-op director)

> Better funding would really help. So much of our equipment is worn out. (Aide)

> We could use $350,000 for next year to give us the capital outlay funds and what is needed for software and instructional materials. We could also use an assistant director and a more reasonable approach to clerical assistance. (College dean)

> Money is always a problem. Lots of students want to come all day--if we just had the money. We need more aides for the whole co-op, especially one with the time for recruitment and follow-up. (Secretary)

> What will we do if the legislature raises the salaries of teachers? (Learning center director)

> Texas should continue to be a national leader in ABE. To do this co-ops will need more money though. (TEA staff member)

> We need money, and we need a group to make sure that money is spent wisely. The emphasis needs to be on the student. We have to have the money to hire teachers; a low teacher/student ratio is essential. We need two people to teach 20 students. (Historical figure)

> More adequate funding is needed to help us recruit the lower-level student. They are more expensive to reach and recruit. We need to fund the lower-level at a higher rate. We also need more networking to share resources both within and outside of ABE. The need for community-based programs is very great. All of this could be helped by funding for computer networking among and between co-ops. Software for materials and staff development could be improved greatly. (Co-op director)

Staffing and Training Needs

Although these needs relate to the funding needs described above, they were more specific in describing the type of staff members needed or the training needs of present staff. Selected comments are listed below.

> I think TEA needs leverage in ABE. A director's position can come open, and there's no requirements for it. There is more regulation over an aide in a JPTA program than there is for a co-op director who will handle a multi-county program. (Co-op director)

> If the program is to grow, you must retain the good teachers. Now teachers are being lost because their schedules are not adjusted to their needs, because they are not full-time, and because they are not being kept happy. (Teacher)

> We need more staff; we have a wealth of materials. We tried volunteers, but that doesn't work (they have other time commitments). Another need is to have more people know about the programs. (Aide)

> So much depends on the leader. We cannot leave the hiring of the co-op director up to just anybody. We should be specific on what we expect from co-op director and set these

standards throughout the state. (Historical figure)

Let new teachers be paid to spend some time observing and learning before they begin to teach. All teachers need much training for the "first night" activities. Also, supervisors could be trained in helping teachers spot their own insecurities about teaching adults. We should spend more money on special projects because we grow through special projects. Finally, train teachers to give special reinforcement to lower-level students. They need constantly to perceive they are capable of learning. (Historical figure)

Adult basic education needs to have more teachers. They need to be able to reach more students and to have smaller classes. They need a good curriculum. (Teacher)

We have the people to start more classes--what we need is more time. Our biggest problem is a shortage of staff. We can't do all that we'd like to do. (Supervisor)

I used to need help with proposal writing. Now I want more management training, e.g., affirmative action, time management, effective communication, new research and timely techniques. We need a Readers Digest of adult education. (Co-op director)

We need more in-depth staff development for our teachers . . . provided by quality, capable people . . . practical kinds of things that they can really use in their classrooms. We do need counseling skills addressed . . . some people do it naturally, others need some training. (Supervisor)

Teaching Needs

As would be expected, most of the pleas for help in this area came from teachers. Most requests were for the resources teachers felt they needed to have in order to have a more effective program. However, a number of them called for the making of the position of the teacher in an adult basic education program a position of respect and stability. This was a theme repeated throughout the on-site visits.

We need more reading material especially in ABE and ESL. The materials progress too fast. Also teachers have concerns about instability of employment in Adult Education in terms of hours and salary. (Teacher)

Not enough material is available for ESL and ABE students to read. The material goes too fast. (Aide)

Adult education should be more secure for the teachers. They never know when the program will be closed. That makes teachers nervous. (Aide)

I think a lead teacher should get better pay. I have to make sure the paperwork is complete and that the projects are taken care of. No supervisor's pay is given. Yet all of the school districts give lead teachers more pay. (Teacher)

More diagnosis which could lead to more accurate instruction at proper grade level for each student. (Supervisor)

We need intake counselor and administrative help. (Supervisor)

Programs should be kept open during the summer instead of shutting down. If we had more time, more people could go in the summer when the children are home. (Teacher)

Have some college courses that people can get credit for, and have the district pay for them as a benefit of teaching in the program. (Teacher)

The thing that would help is if ABE teaching was put on equal footing with public school teaching. (Teacher)

GED has been stereotyped; you just go sit in class. We need to modernize it, e.g., computers--this would be good advertisement. (Supervisor)

Vocational Training Needs

Another consistent need voiced throughout the state during the on-site interviews was the need for greater coordination between adult basic education and vocational training. Students who develop the basic academic skills need vocational training if they are to find decent employment. Teachers, administrators, and students all seemed aware of this, yet there was little or no evidence of links between academic and vocational training in most areas.

Pleas such as the following were voiced frequently.

> We need some vocational training; without it students don't see the value of education. Most of our students only know about automobiles, but they need to go beyond minor things. They could have auto mechanics, body work. (Teacher)

> Programs should include some job training especially with practical experience. Also basic living skills and application. (Student)

> We need vocational skill training. When you take away money for this, we no longer have a comprehensive delivery of services that the state plan calls for. (Co-op director)

Need for a Renewed Spirit

Although people interviewed were less explicit about this need for a "new spirit" or a "philosophy of ABE," this idea was mentioned fairly frequently especially by the more experienced leaders of the state. Clarification of goals, state-wide cooperation, and enthusiasm were the words most frequently used to try to describe this nebulous but important need. A few such thoughts are described in the comments below.

> We need to agree on what we need to be doing in Texas. Until we do, we will just be doing jobs. I think we need to provide for survival skills first and then take care of other needs later. (Historical figure)

> Adult educators are letting things happen to them rather than taking leadership. They should be the "shakers and movers"--such as coordinating all services for adults in an area. (Historical figure)

> When you can't get those outside to recognize the needs of your people, you become frustrated. We have the brains, the technology, the people with experience; we have everything, and we circle around the problems. (Historical figure)

> We need dynamic, energetic leadership from the state level. (Co-op director)

> First, we need some kind of system to get information from local to state level and visa-versa. We all need to know what is happening and what is going to happen. (b) We need an instrument to measure, if possible, teachers' ability to teach adults. (c) Increased funding is needed. We cannot now serve the needs in the state. (d) We need hard data to show our progress and accomplishments. This is very important for our future. (Historical figure)

> (a) We need to become more active politically. (b) We need increased funding because the demand for our programs is growing steadily. (c) The CBHSD needs to become an alternative diploma, not the same diploma. (d) There is a need for more research/development activities to show new ideas and suggestions for doing things better. (e) A networking system is needed--between local level and TEA and among all co-op directors. (f) Co-op directors should meet together more often by themselves to discuss current problems and how to solve them. (Historical figure)

> (a) All co-ops need a computer and some basic equipment. And this must be done through a line item in the budget or some way other than through "indirect costs". (b) We need audits of the indirect funds. (c) The directors need a meeting just for themselves with TEA staff and others available to answer questions. (d) Staff meetings of co-op personnel are needed. (e) Formal training is needed for directors; a rule is needed to make us go back for training. (Co-op director)

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the evaluation study of Adult Basic Education in Texas, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The implications that flow from these conclusions and the appropriate recommendations for practice are much more difficult to recognize and explicate. However, the following comments are offered in an attempt to make the findings of this study more useful to the people of Texas, especially those in adult basic education.

1. A comprehensive adult basic education program has been established in Texas; however, the extent of services offered through this program range from comprehensive centers to marginal sites.

A pattern of service seems to have emerged across the state which concentrates resources in "adult learning centers." These centers tend to be located either within or near the site of the agency housing the co-op director although several co-ops have established learning centers in the larger population centers of their area. Other areas of the co-op are served in a variety of ways; the most typical of these is the independent program existing within a school district and functioning under the direction of the superintendent or someone appointed by him. A few areas use what might readily be called outreach centers. Such centers, or local programs, are attempts to extend the resources of the learning center to other sections of the community or neighboring communities or to reach out to special clientele. These outreach centers retain close contact with the main learning center. Sometimes they are even staffed with personnel who spend the major portion of their time in the major center. A third method of establishing programs throughout the co-op places heavy reliance on supervisors trained and managed by the co-op director. These supervisors oversee programs throughout the area but work closely with the director. It should be mentioned that there are a few co-ops that spread their funding somewhat equally around the geographical area without concentrating resources in selected areas. Such programs tend to be run independently of surrounding sites.

It can easily be seen from the above description that the extent of services offered in the different communities of the state may vary considerably. However, it is obvious that with the present level of funding for Adult Basic Education in Texas it is impossible to establish comprehensive programs in all communities of the state. While all communities of the state do not have an equal need for comprehensive programming, increased state and/or federal funding for the basic education of adults could profitably be used to build additional learning centers for the offering of comprehensive programs to more citizens of the state. Studies to determine the amount of increased funding needed to spread such a comprehensive network of services throughout the state would be valuable; attempts to build a uniform system for the delivery of such services would not.

While the adult learning centers are to be commended for the benefits they provide to the people of Texas, much could be done to improve their services. Closer programmatic ties with vocational training agencies and improved linkages with other community organizations, especially with those offering other services to the same clientele, would strengthen most programs. The benefits of increased communication and mutual sharing of techniques are obvious from observing the results of present efforts at communication and sharing. It would seem that if the state is to continue to consolidate resources in the learning centers, then much of the burden for the improvement of staff development procedures, of instructional techniques, and of program implementation must also be borne by these centers.

Programming by the outreach centers and the classes offered for adults by the school districts could be strengthened considerably by simply providing more continuity among teachers and supervisors. In many cases, the absence of adequate remuneration or strong supervisory support made it appear that the state of Texas was asking these part-time adult educators to provide through a charitable mode services owed in justice by the state to its citizens. These programs--operating on a part-time basis with limited support and practically no training in the conducting of their challenging tasks--must be strengthened in a number of ways.

2. Adult Basic Education offerings are so popular in some areas that people wait in line for a

chance to receive instruction; programs in other locations frequently cancel classes because of low attendance.

The quality of instructional services varies greatly throughout the state. While strong support for the co-op system was universal throughout the state, there were also frequent suggestions of ways of improving the effectiveness of co-op directors. Since programs are so dependent upon this one individual for quality and continuity, it would seem logical to set rigorous standards for the selection and continuing education of these individuals. At present, no such standards or program for continuing training exist. However, it would be presumptuous to lay the total burden of responsibility for quality of program upon the co-op directors of the state. Learning center directors and local supervisors share much of the responsibility. Ultimately, state leaders, local officials, professional trainers, ABE staff members, and many others share this responsibility for strengthening the instructional services available for adults.

3. Variation in the manner in which instructional services are provided can be an effective and professional strategy.

Local conditions and needs for adult education services vary tremendously throughout the state. For example, many areas need extensive offerings to assist their non- English speaking adults to develop the communication skills necessary to be contributing citizens in society. Nevertheless, there can be tremendous variety because in one community the adult students might all be native Spanish speakers while in the next a dozen or more languages may be spoken. In a similar manner the competencies and priorities of those directing the program vary greatly. Consequently, learning centers are promoted in one area, and outreach programs developed in another; resources are dedicated to those who can most quickly benefit in one community while in the next they are channeled to those most in need; self-contained classrooms dominate here, and one-on-one instruction prevails there. However, when the strengths of the program match the needs of the locality, the resulting services far outvalue the resources dedicated to the endeavor. This is in complete accord with Adult Basic Education history for the most successful programs have always been those meeting the needs of the local citizens rather than those imitating programs offered elsewhere. Some adult basic education programs in Texas are very dissimilar in approach, yet they are very similar in effectiveness.

4. Linkages between the adult basic education program other community agencies are extensive in some communities while being almost non-existent in others. However, local descriptions of such ties seldom use formal "linkage" terminology but speak instead of "cooperative" efforts.

Many administrators and teachers view interagency cooperation as a natural but essential aspect of basic education for adults. Desperate or insecure adults need to have their basic needs met before they can devote themselves to learning. A program with limited resources cannot afford to duplicate the efforts of others. Thus, most effective ABE programs have established strong networks throughout the community which augment both the instruction program and other services offered the adult learner. Others see the potential benefits of developing linkages yet realize that they need additional resources to extend their services to other groups in the community. However, there also do appear to be a substantial number of programs that completely ignore the other resources of the community and operate in apparent isolation. Such an approach is not cost or effort effective.

5. Strongest interagency cooperation appears to occur when such cooperative efforts are formally agreed to and with agencies that have a vocational mission.

Co-ops which enact simple yet formalized agreements with linkage agencies seem to build stronger, more extensive working arrangements with such groups than those co-ops which rely solely on verbal and informal interpersonal contacts. Such agreements seem to stimulate other personnel within the agencies to promote cooperative efforts. On occasion, however, such arrangements are formalized among agency heads but never promoted beyond throughout the agency, resulting in confusion and disillusion among staff members.

Cooperative efforts also appear to be strongest when they link ABE efforts to agencies with

a vocational mission such as training schools, manpower development programs, or the Texas Employment Commission. Most ABE students want employment that will enable them to support themselves and those dependent upon them. They support the social system but want to move up in it. Effective teachers and administrators also view a "purely academic" ABE program as a weak program which does not serve the total needs of their clientele.

6. Program planning efforts are severely limited throughout the state.

The major influence on program planning appears to be the requirement on every co-op director to complete an annual "Program Plan" in order to secure funding for the following year. Although intended to promote planning, the annual plan seems to have become a compliance document rather than a planning incentive. In a sense, this is quite understandable because state and federal funding levels for Adult Basic Education have remained approximately the same for the past several years. Directors question the wisdom of planning expanded programs when funding levels are basically inadequate to continue present programming. Except in selected areas, there seems little incentive to seek additional resources through other agencies or programs. Thus, although overwhelming needs are evident, little long range planning is visible. The planning that is done usually is restrict to single year planning.

Emphasis on external criteria and little recognition of program success may also dampen enthusiasm for substantive planning. For example, the future allocation of resources within the state has been linked to the number of undereducate adults served by the area programs. A strict quantitative approach, that is, a counting of contact hours, does little to encourage efforts to reach the hard-to-reach. This is especially true if it is evident that there is to be no audit--qualitative or quantitative--of student contact hours. Similarly, if perceived recognition for success goes to programs with a large number of GED graduates or novel recruitment campaigns, efforts tend to be given to such activities rather than planning for local needs.

7. Many directors are aware of the need for extensive planning but feel that training and encouragement are essential for them to make such substantive and long-range efforts.

There are special problems that face potential planners in ABE. For example, garnering relevant input from all appropriate sources has long been listed as an essential step in the planning process. Assessment of learners' needs has also been maintained as necessity to good adult education program planning. In practice, most directors experience significant difficulty in contacting all appropriate sources in their communities. They operate out of an educational environment usually with little administrative assistance; yet wise planning dictates that they keep up-to-date on needs and efforts of business and industry in the area, social agency programs, other educational services, the economic, cultural, and educational needs of minority groups, and the state of employment locally. Some maintain that the very act of raising questions in these areas also raises expectations of appropriate programming to be offered in the near future.

Undereducation is a complex problem. It rises out of sociological as well as psychological sources; it demands vocational as well as academic training; it gives rise to political as well as economic considerations. Its resolution calls for cooperation among diverse publics. Thus, planning is no easy matter and calls for extensive training if it is to be successful. Such planning must also be long range in the sense that it must extend beyond single budget years and must involve leaders at the state level as well as local levels.

8. The co-op system is widely supported as an appropriate and good system for Texas although differing rationales are offered for the best type of sponsoring unit.

A broad variety of personnel associated with adult basic education throughout Texas view the co-op program as an excellent way of getting the greatest benefit possible from the limited funding available. There is some difference of opinion though over the benefits of locating the co-op center in either a community college, a school district, or a regional service center. Except for minor adjustments to the system, it would not seem wise to change the system unless greater financial resources can be dedicated to it in the future than are being allocated at the present time. Rather, specific

requirements for selection of co-op directors and better support and training services are needed.

9. Widely varying degrees of management efficiency exist in the different regional and local ABE programs of the state.

ABE administrators operate on varied role models which seriously affect their efficiency as program managers. For example, some see themselves primarily as community developers and devote their efforts to building linkages throughout the community and to searching for long-range solutions to underemployment and undereducation. Others maintain a strict coordinator role in which they support the planning efforts of local directors with financial administration of state and federal funds. A third group classify themselves as program specialist and concentrate on developing, supervising, and improving the instructional process in the classrooms of their area. Further study and clarification of the effectiveness of such management models for ABE personnel could be beneficial.

10. Some mid-level supervisors provide meaningful leadership while other provide at the most maintenance functions.

The entire level of middle management in adult basic education in Texas is very difficult to address because there seems to be no system or standard for such personnel anywhere in the state. Their titles vary: supervisor, assistant director, learning center director, or master teacher. In some areas, these mid-managers are the decision makers for their area; in others, they have difficulty getting other administrators or teachers to listen to them. Some are appointed in accordance with local political needs rather than in agreement with individual talents and abilities. There seems to be little agreement regarding the competencies they should possess or the tasks they should perform. Many would benefit greatly from role clarification and specific training for their positions. Area and state leaders might also do well to consider more carefully the potential uses of mid-management personnel throughout the state.

11. Successful ABE teachers are marked more by their "human" skills than by their content expertise.

Hiring practices by experienced ABE administrators reflect their concern that teachers be proficient in interpersonal skills such as understanding of the adult students, patience, listening and communicating skills, and adeptness at providing encouragement and support. Expertise in content and specific teaching skills is appreciated, but the interpersonal skills are essential. Student comments also support the vital nature of interpersonal skills in ABE instructional staff. In general, adult students are very appreciative of their teachers, but their highest acclamations go to those who listen, who explain things clearly, who are supportive and encouraging, and who care. The importance of such interpersonal skills should be openly acknowledged in staffing policies and in inservice instructional practice.

12. Teachers who remain in the adult basic education program tend to do so out of a spirit of dedication and commitment rather than for monetary rewards.

In many locations the recruitment of instructional staff appeared an almost haphazard affair. Teachers entered the program because they needed a part-time job, because some friend suggested their name to the director, or for countless and apparently accidental reasons. Those who stayed did so because they felt they were providing an important service and because they became committed to helping motivated adults gain a second chance at making something of their lives. The salary and benefits offered the instructional staff are for the most part inadequate to hold them on the job. Career ladders, health care insurance, recognition of longevity in their position, and similar common benefits would do much to encourage staff retention. In times of economic slowdown, many excellent teachers cannot afford to work in adult basic education programs.

13. The ratio of part-time to full-time teachers is shifting toward the part-time staff at an alarming rate.

Although there is much evidence to suggest that the full-time staff members are the mainstay of ABE program, many directors feel they are being forced to cut back on such staff for

financial reasons. The salary of a full-time teacher can support more instructional time when divided among several part-time employees. However, the part-time staff tend not to be involved in such activities as long-range planning, curriculum development, recruitment and public relations activities, on-going staff development, and continuous program evaluation--all of which are essential to the continued growth of the program. For the most part, directors realize the negative implications of greater reliance on part-time personnel, but situations such as the recent increase of teacher base salaries throughout the state without any increase for adult education teachers forced many to eliminate full-time positions. Such situations also have severe negative implications for people considering careers in adult basic education. A thorough review of salary and benefit provision for full-time instructional staff in Adult Basic Education throughout Texas is essential.

14. Aides have been performing many traditional teacher functions.

Little distinction is made between certified teachers and non-certified aides in the assignment of instructional tasks. This is not true in all locations but definitely is the case in a significant number of programs where the only distinction between teacher and aide is in title and salary. A complicating factor is that many of these aides are very competent instructors and relate better to many of the students than do some of the professionally trained teachers. Also, many of these aides are taking college courses and would like to be certified as instructors of adults. However, there are neither any such certification nor training programs specifically directed toward adult education in many localities. Standards which recognize the value of qualified aides and specific training for them are needed in Texas.

15. Traditional methods for supplying training for instructional staff are changing from group approaches to more individualized systems; the traditional content of "how to teach adults" is still that most desired by teachers.

Individualized approaches such as pairing a new teacher with an experienced one, sending an instructor to a special training session, or having staff observe the most successful programs or instructors in the area are replacing the traditional co-op wide Saturday workshop in some regions of the state. Other areas are using extended approaches such as several-day workshops or special courses to provide for staff development. It is vital that such approaches be encourage and supported by leadership in the state. Staff development in ABE is a complex process complicated especially by the part-time nature of many staff members and by the varied special areas of practice in the field. It is impossible to group together those with full-time and part-time teaching assignments, at GED and ESL levels, and in learning centers and self-contained classrooms and expect to provide adequate continuing professional education. Such practices should be brought to a halt, and funds used in the past for this purpose should be dedicated to finding new and adequate ways of training educators of adults.

The content that instructors need and want is instruction in teaching adults, methods useful in working with the mature learner, and increased competencies in relating to the adult. These are the process skills traditionally held essential for teachers of adults. They should be stressed in staff development activities and professional trainers in the state should be encouraged to come up with new methods and new materials for building such competencies in ABE staff members.

16. Increased self-confidence is both the prime need and the greatest gain of ABE students.

Most students enter the program with a weak self-concept and repeated experiences with failure in relationship to their own education. Teachers, administrators, and students all agree that learning is a slow and difficult process until a sense of confidence can be built for the adult learners. In like manner, when students or teachers talk of success accomplished through the ABE program, it is usually either directly or indirectly in terms of increased self-confidence .

It would seem that the adult basic education program can most appropriately be spoken of in terms of freeing individuals--freeing them to be proud and productive citizens, to communicate with those around them, to find better working conditions, to continue their education, and to cope with life. Essential to all of these freedoms is the self-confidence that

makes such growth possible. Therefore, if the ABE program actually exists to enable citizens to develop the potential they have within them, this should openly be acknowledged, and all in the ABE enterprise should concentrate on accomplishing that task. Instead of commenting on how many people got off welfare or learned to read, adult educators could then brag of how many people got rid of a sour self-concept and learned to be productive citizens and to actively participate in a democratic society.

17. There are more "stop-outs" than "drop-outs" in Adult Basic Education.

Most of the mature students that stop coming to ABE learning situations do so either because they have accomplished their present goals or because economic, personal, or family responsibility prevents them from continuing. When further learning goals develop or the absence-causing need recedes, they return to the learning situation. Less mature adults may need to develop a greater sense of responsibility before they are ready to exert the effort necessary to learn in the ABE setting.

ABE administrators should recognize this frequent pressure to "stop-out" and make it easy for individuals to return to the program in either that same locality or elsewhere. They should also try to manipulate resources so that the absence of child care, transportation, or job-seeking skills do not force needy adult learners into long absences from the learning environment.

18. The existing approach is reaching only a limited number of those most-in-need.

Those with the greatest need for adult education and those most alienated in society are being recruited into the ABE program only in limited numbers. Such individuals are not likely to volunteer themselves for the program; they need individual attention both in recruitment and in teaching. They need someone to relate to them and their problems rather than to offer another agency's help. Many need special help to be drawn out of the unreality into which they have slipped through chemical dependence, sickness, or despair.

Many things should be done to attract such individuals into the ABE program. First of all, the program must have reality for them in the sense that it must deal with their real needs; it must provide for the physical and economic needs that are most pressing; it must offer some reason for hope--some reason for them to believe that they can affect their own futures. Local programs should identify who these hard-to-reach are in their local area and what their major needs might be. Administrators should realize that they must reach out to these individuals by going into their neighborhoods with learning and growing activities rather than begging them to "come out to the adult center." State and federal governments should examine ways to provide the risk capital that local programs need if they are to invest some of their limited funding in trying to reach the hard-to-reach.

19. The 10 years of state funding for adult basic education has given a tremendous boost to education for needy adults in Texas.

Without state funding, the co-op system, the adult learning centers, the GED and high school diploma programs, the full-time personnel in adult education, and many local programs either would not have developed or would not have advanced to the extent that they have during the past decade. The benefits to Texas citizens have been tremendous not just in the sense of individuals given a second chance at life but in the increased number of better citizens, more productive workers, improved parents and neighbors, and less alienated members of society. The economic value of such contribution could easily be estimated by examining the benefits of a higher educated, more confident working force.

The benefits of the ABE program should be communicated more clearly and more meaningfully to all the people of Texas. The leadership of the state promoting educational opportunities for adults should be acknowledged as true promoters of the good of the state. The staff members of adult education programs throughout Texas should be encouraged from the success of the past 10 years and rededicate themselves to building a constantly improving program that releases in people the potential to constantly improve themselves.

20. Adult Basic Education is essentially a human enterprise.

The essence of the teaching/learning situation is the relationship among the individuals

involved in the enterprise. This is especially evident when one studies the adult basic education program. The adult learner is usually in such a state of stress that a strong supporting relationship with an understanding teacher is vital. Often, the potential learner must experience acceptance from the teacher before that person can accept himself/herself and the others involved in the learning activity. The acceptance of others opens additional avenues for growth since fellow learners and other staff members frequently provide the models of growth that have been lacking in the ABE participant's life. The final result of the learning activity is also essentially human for it is not tests passed or content learned that frees the participant to grow, but rather it is the growth in self that frees the learner to be and to do.

Recognizing this should move leadership in the state to see the need for constant updating and renewal of the program. It is a human enterprise, and humans need constant re-creation. Thus, the burning need exists for such vital elements as substantive and long-range planning, the recognition and encouragement of personnel, and the flexibility in dealing with individuality within the learning environment. Since the renewal of a human enterprise is more a matter of spirit than material concepts, it is the final recommendation of this evaluation study that a special effort be made to renew the spirit of adult basic education in Texas. Specific plans for doing this are beyond the scope of this report, but this renewal should involve the bringing together of people involved in ABE to understand one another better and to examine together their philosophy of the essential ingredients of this important work.